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THE  
FIFTEEN DECISIVE  
BATTLES OF THE WORLD;  
FROM MARATHON TO WATERLOO.

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Those few battles, of which a contrary event would have essentially varied  
the drama of the world in all its subsequent scenes.—HALLAM.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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## PREFACE.

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It is an honourable characteristic of the Spirit of this Age, that projects of violence and warfare are regarded among civilized states with gradually increasing aversion. The Universal Peace Society certainly does not, and probably never will, enrol the majority of statesmen among its members. But even those who look upon the Appeal of Battle as occasionally unavoidable in international controversies, concur in thinking it a deplorable necessity, only to be resorted to when all peaceful modes of arrangement have been vainly tried, and when the law of self-defence justifies a State, like an individual, in using force to protect itself from imminent and serious injury. For a writer, therefore, of the present day to choose battles for his favourite topic, merely because they were battles; merely because so many myriads of troops were arrayed in them, and so many hundreds or thousands of human beings stabbed, hewed, or shot each other to death during them,



would argue strange weakness or depravity of mind. Yet it cannot be denied that a fearful and wonderful interest is attached to these scenes of carnage. There is undeniable greatness in the disciplined courage, and in the love of honour, which makes the combatants confront agony and destruction. And the powers of the human intellect are rarely more strongly displayed, than they are in the Commander, who regulates, arrays, and wields at his will these masses of armed disputants; who, cool, yet daring in the midst of peril, reflects on all, and provides for all, ever ready with fresh resources and designs, as the vicissitudes of the storm of slaughter require. But these qualities, however high they may appear, are to be found in the basest as well as in the noblest of mankind. Catiline was as brave a soldier as Leonidas, and a much better officer. Alva surpassed the Prince of Orange in the field; and Suwarrow was the military superior of Kosciusko. To adopt the emphatic words of Byron:—

“’Tis the Cause makes all,  
Degrades or hallows courage in its fall.”

There are some battles, also, which claim our attention, independently of the moral worth of the combatants, on account of their enduring importance, and by reason of the practical influence on our own social and political condition, which we

can trace up to the results of those engagements. They have for us an abiding and actual interest, both while we investigate the chain of causes and effects, by which they have helped to make us what we are; and also while we speculate on what we probably should have been, if any one of those battles had come to a different termination. Hallam has admirably expressed this in his remarks on the victory gained by Charles Martel, between Tours and Poitiers, over the invading Saracens.

He says of it that, "it may justly be reckoned among those few battles of which a contrary event would have essentially varied the drama of the world in all its subsequent scenes: with Marathon, Arbela, the Metaurus, Chalons, and Leipsic." It was the perusal of this note of Hallam's, that first led me to the consideration of my present subject. I certainly differ from that great historian as to the comparative importance of some of the battles which he thus enumerates, and also of some which he omits. It is probable, indeed, that no two historical inquirers would entirely agree in their lists of the Decisive Battles of the World. Different minds will naturally vary in the impressions which particular events make on them; and in the degree of interest, with which they watch the career, and reflect on the importance of different historical personages. But our concurring in our catalogues is

of little moment, provided we learn to look on these great historical events in the spirit which Hallam's observations indicate. Those remarks should teach us to watch how the interests of many states are often involved in the collisions between a few; and how the effect of those collisions is not limited to a single age, but may give an impulse which will sway the fortunes of successive generations of mankind. Most valuable also is the mental discipline which is thus acquired, and by which we are trained not only to observe what has been, and what is, but also to ponder on what might have been.\*

We thus learn not to judge of the wisdom of measures too exclusively by the results. We learn to apply the juster standard of seeing what the circumstances and the probabilities were, that surrounded a statesman or a general at the time when he decided on his plan: we value him not by his fortune, but by his *Προαίρεσις*, to adopt the expressive word of Polybius,† for which our language gives no equivalent.

The reasons why each of the following Fifteen Battles has been selected will, I trust, appear when it is described. But it may be well to pre-

\* See Bolingbroke, "On the Study and Use of History," vol. ii. p. 497, of his collected notes.

† Polyb. lib. ix. sect. 9.

mise a few remarks on the negative tests which have led me to reject others, which at first sight may appear equal in magnitude and importance to the chosen Fifteen.

I need hardly remark that it is not the number of killed and wounded in a battle that determines its general historical importance.\* It is not because only a few hundreds fell in the battle by which Joan of Arc captured the Tourelles and raised the siege of Orléans, that the effect of that crisis is to be judged : nor would a full belief in the largest number which Eastern historians state to have been slaughtered in any of the numerous conflicts between Asiatic rulers, make me regard the engagement in which they fell, as one of paramount importance to mankind. But, besides battles of this kind, there are many of great consequence, and attended with circumstances which powerfully excite our feelings and rivet our attention, and yet which appear to me of mere secondary rank, inasmuch as either their effects were limited in area, or they themselves merely confirmed some great tendency or bias which an earlier battle had originated. For example, the encounters between the Greeks and Persians, which followed Marathon, seem to me

\* See Montesquieu, "*Grandeur et Décadence des Romains*," p. 35.

not to have been phenomena of primary impulse. Greek superiority had been already asserted, Asiatic ambition had already been checked, before Salamis and Platæa confirmed the superiority of European free states over Oriental despotism. So, Ægos-Potamos, which finally crushed the maritime power of Athens, seems to me inferior in interest to the defeat before Syracuse, where Athens received her first fatal check, and after which she only struggled to retard her downfall. I think similarly of Zama with respect to Carthage, as compared with the Metaurus: and, on the same principle, the subsequent great battles of the Revolutionary war appear to me inferior in their importance to Valmy, which first determined the military character and career of the French Revolution.

I am aware that a little activity of imagination, and a slight exercise of metaphysical ingenuity, may amuse us by showing how the chain of circumstances is so linked together, that the smallest skirmish, or the slightest occurrence of any kind, that ever occurred, may be said to have been essential in its actual termination to the whole order of subsequent events. But when I speak of causes and effects, I speak of the obvious and important agency of one fact upon another, and not of remote and fancifully infinitesimal influences.

I am aware that, on the other hand, the reproach of Fatalism is justly incurred by those, who, like the writers of a certain school in a neighbouring country, recognise in history nothing more than a series of necessary phenomena, which follow inevitably one upon the other. But when, in this work, I speak of probabilities, I speak of human probabilities only. When I speak of Cause and Effect, I speak of those general laws only by which we perceive the sequence of human affairs to be usually regulated; and in which we recognise emphatically the wisdom and power of the Supreme Lawgiver, the Design of the Designer.

MITRE COURT CHAMBERS, TEMPLE,  
*June 26, 1851.*



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THE  
FIFTEEN DECISIVE BATTLES  
OF THE WORLD.

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CHAPTER I.

THE BATTLE OF MARATHON.

*“Quibus actus uterque  
Europæ atque Asiæ fatis concurrerit orbis.”*

Two thousand three hundred and forty years ago, a council of Athenian officers was summoned on the slope of one of the mountains that look over the plain of Marathon, on the eastern coast of Attica. The immediate subject of their meeting was to consider whether they should give battle to an enemy that lay encamped on the shore beneath them; but on the result of their deliberations depended, not merely the fate of two armies, but the whole future progress of human civilization.

There were eleven members of that council of war. Ten were the generals, who were then

annually elected at Athens, one for each of the local tribes into which the Athenians were divided. Each general led the men of his own tribe, and each was invested with equal military authority. But one of the Archons was also associated with them in the general command of the army. This magistrate was termed the Polemarch or War-Ruler; he had the privilege of leading the right wing of the army in battle, and his vote in a council of war was equal to that of any of the generals. A noble Athenian named Callimachus was the War-Ruler of this year; and as such, stood listening to the earnest discussion of the ten generals. They had, indeed, deep matter for anxiety, though little aware how momentous to mankind were the votes they were about to give, or how the generations to come would read with interest the record of their discussions. They saw before them the invading forces of a mighty empire, which had in the last fifty years shattered and enslaved nearly all the kingdoms and principalities of the then known world. They knew that all the resources of their own country were comprised in the little army entrusted to their guidance. They saw before them a chosen host of the Great King, sent to wreak his special wrath on that country, and on the other insolent little Greek community, which had dared to aid his rebels and burn the capital of one

of his provinces. That victorious host had already fulfilled half its mission of vengeance. Eretria, the confederate of Athens in the bold march against Sardis nine years before, had fallen in the last few days ; and the Athenian generals could discern from the heights the island of *Ægilia*, in which the Persians had deposited their Eretrian prisoners, whom they had reserved to be led away captives into Upper Asia, there to hear their doom from the lips of King Darius himself. Moreover, the men of Athens knew that in the camp before them was their own banished tyrant, who was seeking to be reinstated by foreign scymitars in despotic sway over any remnant of his countrymen, that might survive the sack of their town, and might be left behind as too worthless for leading away into Median bondage.

The numerical disparity between the force which the Athenian commanders had under them, and that which they were called on to encounter, was hopelessly apparent to some of the council. The historians who wrote nearest to the time of the battle, do not pretend to give any detailed statements of the numbers engaged, but there are sufficient data for our making a general estimate. Every free Greek was trained to military duty ; and, from the incessant border wars between the different states, few Greeks reached the age of

manhood without having seen some service. But the muster-roll of free Athenian citizens of an age fit for military duty never exceeded thirty thousand, and at this epoch probably did not amount to two-thirds of that number. Moreover, the poorer portion of these were unprovided with the equipments, and untrained to the operations of the regular infantry. Some detachments of the best-armed troops would be required to garrison the city itself and man the various fortified posts in the territory; so that it is impossible to reckon the fully equipped force that marched from Athens to Marathon, when the news of the Persian landing arrived, at higher than ten thousand men.\*

With one exception the other Greeks held back from aiding them. Sparta had promised assistance, but the Persians had landed on the sixth day of the moon, and a religious scruple delayed the march of Spartan troops till the moon should have reached its full. From one quarter only,

\* The historians, who lived long after the time of the battle, such as Justin, Plutarch, and others give ten thousand as the number of the Athenian army. Not much reliance could be placed on their authority if unsupported by other evidence; but a calculation made for the number of the Athenian free population remarkably confirms it. For the data of this, see Boeck's "Public Economy of Athens," vol. i. p. 45. Some *Métroικοι* probably served as Hoplites at Marathon, but the number of resident aliens at Athens cannot have been large at this period.

and that from a most unexpected one, did Athens receive aid at the moment of her great peril.

Some years before this time the little state of Plataea in Bœotia, being hard pressed by her powerful neighbour, Thebes, had asked the protection of Athens, and had owed to an Athenian army the rescue of her independence. Now when it was noised over Greece that the Mede had come from the uttermost parts of the earth to destroy Athens, the brave Plataeans, unsolicited, marched with their whole force to assist the defence, and to share the fortunes of their benefactors. The general levy of the Plataeans only amounted to a thousand men; and this little column marching from their city along the southern ridge of Mount Cithæron, and thence across the Attic territory, joined the Athenian forces above Marathon almost immediately before the battle. The reinforcement was numerically small, but the gallant spirit of the men who composed it, must have made it of tenfold value to the Athenians; and its presence must have gone far to dispel the cheerless feeling of being deserted and friendless, which the delay of the Spartan succours was calculated to create among the Athenian ranks.

This generous daring of their weak but true-hearted ally was never forgotten at Athens. The

Platæans were made the civil fellow-countrymen of the Athenians, except the right of exercising certain political functions; and from that time forth in the solemn sacrifices at Athens, the public prayers were offered up for a joint blessing from Heaven upon the Athenians, and the Platæans also.\*

After the junction of the column from Plataea, the Athenian commanders must have had under them about eleven thousand fully-armed and disciplined infantry, and probably a larger number of irregular light-armed troops; as, besides the poorer citizens who went to the field armed with javelins, cutlasses, and targets, each regular heavy-armed soldier was attended in the camp by one or more slaves, who were armed like the inferior freemen.†

\* Mr. Grote observes (vol. iv. p. 464), that "this volunteer march of the whole Platæan force to Marathon is one of the most affecting incidents of all Grecian history." In truth, the whole career of Plataea, and the friendship, strong, even unto death, between her and Athens, form one of the most affecting episodes in the history of antiquity. In the Peloponnesian war the Platæans again were true to the Athenians against all risks, and all calculation of self-interest; and the destruction of Plataea was the consequence. There are few nobler passages in the classics than the speech in which the Platæan prisoners of war, after the memorable siege of their city, justify before their Spartan executioners, their loyal adherence to Athens. See Thucydides, lib. iii. secs. 53—60.

† At the battle of Plataea, eleven years after Marathon,

Cavalry or archers the Athenians (on this occasion) had none: and the use in the field of military engines was not at that period introduced into ancient warfare.

Contrasted with their own scanty forces, the Greek commanders saw stretched before them, along the shores of the winding bay, the tents and shipping of the varied nations who marched to do the bidding of the king of the eastern world. The difficulty of finding transports and of securing provisions would form the only limit to the numbers of a Persian army. Nor is there any reason to suppose the estimate of Justin exaggerated, who rates at a hundred thousand the force which on this occasion had sailed, under the satraps Datis and Artaphernes, from the Cilician shores against the devoted coasts of Eubœa and Attica. And after largely deducting from this total, so as to allow for mere mariners and camp followers, there must still have remained fearful odds against the national levies of the Athenians. Nor could Greek generals then feel that confidence in the superior quality of their troops, which ever since the battle of Marathon has animated Europeans in conflicts with Asiatics; as, for instance, in the

each of the eight thousand Athenian regular infantry who served them, was attended by a light-armed slave. Herod. lib. viii. c. 28, 29.



after struggles between Greece and Persia, or when the Roman legions encountered the myriads of Mithridates and Tigranes, or as is the case in the Indian campaigns of our own regiments. On the contrary, up to the day of Marathon the Medes and Persians were reputed invincible. They had more than once met Greek troops in Asia Minor, in Cyprus, in Egypt, and had invariably beaten them. Nothing can be stronger than the expressions used by the early Greek writers respecting the terror which the name of the Medes inspired, and the prostration of men's spirits before the apparently resistless career of the Persian arms.\* It is, therefore, little to be wondered at, that five of the ten Athenian generals shrank from the prospect of fighting a pitched battle against an enemy so superior in numbers, and so formidable in military renown. Their own position on the heights was strong, and offered great advantages to a small defending force against assailing masses. They deemed it mere foolhardiness to descend into the plain to

\* Ἀθηναῖοι πρῶτοι ἀνέσχοντο ἐσθιῆτά τε Μηδικὴν ὀρέωντες, καὶ τοὺς ἄνδρας ταύτην ἐσθημένους· τέως δὲ ἦν τοῖσι "Ἑλλησι καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τῶν Μήδων φόβος ἀκούσαι.—HERODOTUS, lib. vi. c. 112.

Αἱ δὲ γινώμαι δεδουλώμεναι ἀπάντων ἀνθρώπων ἦσαν· οὕτω πολλὰ καὶ μεγάλα καὶ μάχιμα γένη καταδεδουλωμένη ἦν ἡ Περσῶν ἀρχή.—PLATO, *Menexenus*.

be trampled down by the Asiatic horse, overwhelmed with the archery, or cut to pieces by the invincible veterans of Cambyses and Cyrus. Moreover, Sparta, the great war-state of Greece, had been applied to, and had promised succour to Athens, though the religious observance which the Dorians paid to certain times and seasons had for the present delayed their march. Was it not wise, at any rate, to wait till the Spartans came up, and to have the help of the best troops in Greece, before they exposed themselves to the shock of the dreaded Medes?

Specious as these reasons might appear, the other five generals were for speedier and bolder operations. And, fortunately for Athens and for the world, one of them was a man, not only of the highest military genius, but also of that energetic character, which impresses its own type and ideas upon spirits feebler in conception.

Miltiades was the head of one of the noblest houses at Athens; he ranked the *Æacidæ* among his ancestry, and the blood of Achilles flowed in the veins of the hero of Marathon. One of his immediate ancestors had acquired the dominion of the Thracian Chersonese, and thus the family became at the same time Athenian citizens and Thracian princes. This occurred at the time when Pisistratus was tyrant of Athens. Two

of the relatives of Miltiades — an uncle of the same name, and a brother named Stesagoras—had ruled the Chersonese before Miltiades became its prince. He had been brought up at Athens in the house of his father, Cimon,\* who was renowned throughout Greece for his victories in the Olympic chariot-races, and who must have been possessed of great wealth. The sons of Pisistratus, who succeeded their father in the tyranny at Athens, caused Cimon to be assassinated,† but they treated the young Miltiades with favour and kindness, and when his brother Stesagoras died in the Chersonese, they sent him out there as lord of the principality. This was about twenty-eight years before the battle of Marathon, and it is with his arrival in the Chersonese that our first knowledge of the career and character of Miltiades commences. We find, in the first act recorded of him, the proof of the same resolute and unscrupulous spirit that marked his mature age. His brother's authority in the principality had been shaken by war and revolt: Miltiades determined to rule more securely. On his arrival he kept close within his house, as if he was mourning for his brother. The principal men of the Chersonese hearing of this, assembled from all the towns and districts, and went together

\* Herodotus, lib. vi. c. 103.

† Ib.

to the house of Miltiades, on a visit of condolence. As soon as he had thus got them in his power, he made them all prisoners. He then asserted and maintained his own absolute authority in the peninsula, taking into his pay a body of five hundred regular troops, and strengthening his interest by marrying the daughter of the king of the neighbouring Thracians.

When the Persian power was extended to the Hellespont and its neighbourhood, Miltiades, as prince of the Chersonese, submitted to King Darius; and he was one of the numerous tributary rulers who led their contingents of men to serve in the Persian army, in the expedition against Scythia. Miltiades and the vassal Greeks of Asia Minor, were left by the Persian king in charge of the bridge across the Danube, when the invading army crossed that river, and plunged into the wilds of the country that now is Russia, in vain pursuit of the ancestors of the modern Cossacks. On learning the reverses that Darius met with in the Scythian wilderness, Miltiades proposed to his companions that they should break the bridge down, and leave the Persian king and his army to perish by famine, and the Scythian arrows. The rulers of the Asiatic Greek cities, whom Miltiades addressed, shrank from this bold but ruthless stroke against the

Persian power, and Darius returned in safety. But it was known what advice Miltiades had given, and the vengeance of Darius was thenceforth specially directed against the man, who had counselled such a deadly blow against his empire and his person. The occupation of the Persian arms in other quarters left Miltiades for some years after this in possession of the Chersonese; but it was precarious and interrupted. He however availed himself of the opportunity which his position gave him of conciliating the good will of his fellow-countrymen at Athens, by conquering and placing under the Athenian authority the islands of Lemnos and Imbros, to which Athens had ancient claims, but which she had never previously been able to bring into complete subjection. At length in 494 B.C., the complete suppression of the Ionian revolt by the Persians left their armies and fleets at liberty to act against the enemies of the Great King to the west of the Hellespont. A strong squadron of Phœnician galleys was sent against the Chersonese. Miltiades knew that resistance was hopeless; and while the Phœnicians were at Tenedos, he loaded five galleys with all the treasure that he could collect, and sailed away for Athens. The Phœnicians fell in with him, and chased him hard along the north of the Ægean. One of his galleys,

on board of which was his eldest son Metiochus, was actually captured. But Miltiades, with the other four succeeded in reaching the friendly coast of Imbros in safety. Thence he afterwards proceeded to Athens, and resumed his station as a free citizen of the Athenian commonwealth.

The Athenians at this time had recently expelled Hippias, the son of Pisistratus, the last of their tyrants. They were in the full glow of their newly-recovered liberty and equality; and the constitutional changes of Cleisthenes had inflamed their republican zeal to the utmost. Miltiades had enemies at Athens; and these availing themselves of the state of popular feeling, brought him to trial for his life for having been tyrant of the Chersonese. The charge did not necessarily import any acts of cruelty or wrong to individuals: it was founded on no specific law; but it was based on the horror with which the Greeks of that age regarded every man who made himself arbitrary master of his fellow men, and exercised irresponsible dominion over them. The fact of Miltiades having so ruled in the Chersonese was undeniable; but the question which the Athenians assembled in judgment must have tried, was whether Miltiades, although tyrant of the Chersonese, de-

served punishment as an Athenian citizen. The eminent service that he had done the state in conquering Lemnos and Imbros for it, pleaded strongly in his favour. The people refused to convict him. He stood high in public opinion. And when the coming invasion of the Persians was known, the people wisely elected him one of their generals for the year.

Two other men of high eminence in history, though their renown was achieved at a later period than that of Miltiades, were also among the ten Athenian generals at Marathon. One was Themistocles, the future founder of the Athenian navy, and the destined victor of Salamis. The other was Aristides, who afterwards led the Athenian troops at Plataea, and whose integrity and just popularity acquired for his country, when the Persians had finally been repulsed, the advantageous pre-eminence of being acknowledged by half of the Greeks as their imperial leader and protector. It is not recorded what part either Themistocles or Aristides took in the debate of the council of war at Marathon. But from the character of Themistocles, his boldness, and his intuitive genius for extemporising the best measures in every emergency\* (a quality which the greatest of historians ascribes to him beyond all

\* See the character of Themistocles in the 138th section

his contemporaries), we may well believe that the vote of Themistocles was for prompt and decisive action. On the vote of Aristides it may be more difficult to speculate. His predilection for the Spartans may have made him wish to wait till they came up; but, though circumspect, he was neither timid as a soldier nor as a politician, and the bold advice of Miltiades may probably have found in Aristides a willing, most assuredly it found in him a candid hearer.

Miltiades felt no hesitation as to the course which the Athenian army ought to pursue: and earnestly did he press his opinion on his brother-generals. Practically acquainted with the organization of the Persian armies, Miltiades felt convinced of the superiority of the Greek troops, if properly handled: he saw with the military eye of a great general the advantage which the position of the forces gave him for a sudden attack, and as a profound politician he felt the perils of remaining inactive, and of giving treachery time to ruin the Athenian cause.

One officer in the council of war had not yet voted. This was Callimachus, the War-Ruler.

of the first book of Thucydides, especially the last sentence.  
*Καὶ τὸ ξύμπαν εἰπεῖν, φύσεως μὲν δυνάμει μελέτης δὲ βραχύτητι  
 κράτιστος δὴ οὗτος αὐτοσχεδιάζων τὰ δέοντα ἐγένετο.*



The votes of the generals were five and five, so that the voice of Callimachus would be decisive.

On that vote, in all human probability, the destiny of all the nations of the world depended. Miltiades turned to him, and in simple soldierly eloquence, the substance of which we may read faithfully reported in Herodotus, who had conversed with the veterans of Marathon, the great Athenian, thus adjured his countrymen to vote for giving battle.

“It now rests with you, Callimachus, either to enslave Athens, or by assuring her freedom, to win yourself an immortality of fame, such as not even Harmodius and Aristogeiton have acquired. For never, since the Athenians were a people, were they in such danger as they are in at this moment. If they bow the knee to these Medes, they are to be given up to Hippias, and you know what they then will have to suffer. But if Athens comes victorious out of this contest, she has it in her to become the first city of Greece. Your vote is to decide whether we are to join battle or not. If we do not bring on a battle presently, some factious intrigue will disunite the Athenians and the city will be betrayed to the Medes. But if we fight, before there is anything rotten in the state of Athens, I believe that, provided the Gods will give fair

play and no favour, we are able to get the best of it in an engagement."\*

The vote of the brave War-Ruler was gained, the council determined to give battle; and such was the ascendancy and acknowledged military eminence of Miltiades, that his brother generals one and all gave up their days of command to him, and cheerfully acted under his orders. Fearful, however, of creating any jealousy, and of so failing to obtain the vigorous co-operation of all parts of his small army, Miltiades waited till the day when the chief command would have come round to him in regular rotation, before he led the troops against the enemy.

The inaction of the Asiatic commanders during

\* Herodotus, lib. vi. sec. 109. The 116th section is to my mind clear proof that Herodotus had personally conversed with Epizelus, one of the veterans of Marathon. The substance of the speech of Miltiades would naturally become known by the report of some of his colleagues. The speeches which ancient historians place in the mouths of kings and generals, are generally inventions of their own; but part of this speech of Miltiades bears internal evidence of authenticity. Such is the case with the remarkable expression *ἦν δὲ ξυμβάλλωμεν πρὶν τι καὶ σαθρὸν Ἀθηναίων μετεξέτεροισι ἐγγενέσθαι, θεῶν τὰ ἴσα νεμόντων, οἷοι τέ εἴμεν περιγενέσθαι τῇ συμβολῇ*. This daring and almost irreverent assertion would never have been coined by Herodotus, but it is precisely consonant with what we know of the character of Miltiades; and it is an expression which, if used by him, would be sure to be remembered and repeated by his hearers.

this interval appears strange at first sight; but Hippias was with them, and they and he were aware of their chance of a bloodless conquest through the machinations of his partizans among the Athenians. The nature of the ground also explains in many points the tactics of the opposite generals before the battle, as well as the operations of the troops during the engagement.

The plain of Marathon, which is about twenty-two miles distant from Athens, lies along the bay of the same name on the north-eastern coast of Attica. The plain is nearly in the form of a crescent, and about six miles in length. It is about two miles broad in the centre, where the space between the mountains and the sea is greatest, but it narrows towards either extremity, the mountains coming close down to the water at the horns of the bay. There is a valley trending inwards from the middle of the plain, and a ravine comes down to it to the southward. Elsewhere it is closely girt round on the land side by rugged limestone mountains, which are thickly studded with pines, olive-trees, and cedars, and overgrown with the myrtle, arbutus, and the other low odoriferous shrubs that everywhere perfume the Attic air. The level of the ground is now varied by the mound raised over those who fell in the battle, but it was an unbroken plain when

the Persians encamped on it. There are marshes at each end, which are dry in spring and summer, and then offer no obstruction to the horseman, but are commonly flooded with rain and so rendered impracticable for cavalry in the autumn, the time of year at which the action took place.


The Greeks, lying encamped on the mountains, could watch every movement of the Persians on the plain below, while they were enabled completely to mask their own. Miltiades also had from his position, the power of giving battle whenever he pleased, or of delaying it at his discretion, unless Datis were to attempt the perilous operation of storming the heights.

If we turn to the map of the old world, to test the comparative territorial resources of the two states whose armies were now about to come into conflict, the immense preponderance of the material power of the Persian king over that of the Athenian republic, is more striking than any similar contrast which history can supply. It has been truly remarked, that, in estimating mere areas, Attica, containing on its whole surface only seven-hundred square miles, shrinks into insignificance if compared with many a baronial fief of the middle ages, or many a colonial allotment of modern times. Its antagonist, the Persian empire, comprised the whole of modern

Asiatic and much of modern European Turkey, the modern kingdom of Persia, and the countries of modern Georgia, Armenia, Balkh, the Punjaub, Affghanistan, Beloochistan, Egypt, and Tripoli.

Nor could an European, in the beginning of the fifth century before our era, look upon this huge accumulation of power beneath the sceptre of a single Asiatic ruler, with the indifference with which we now observe on the map the extensive dominions of modern Oriental sovereigns. For, as has been already remarked, before Marathon was fought, the prestige of success and of supposed superiority of race was on the side of the Asiatic against the European. Asia was the original seat of human societies, and long before any trace can be found of the inhabitants of the rest of the world having emerged from the rudest barbarism, we can perceive that mighty and brilliant empires flourished in the Asiatic continent. They appear before us through the twilight of primeval history, dim and indistinct, but massive and majestic, like mountains in the early dawn.

Instead, however, of the infinite variety and restless change which has characterised the institutions and fortunes of European states ever since the commencement of the civilization of our continent, a monotonous uniformity pervades the



histories of nearly all Oriental empires, from the most ancient down to the most recent times. They are characterized by the rapidity of their early conquests, by the immense extent of the dominions comprised in them, by the establishment of a satrap or pacha system of governing the provinces, by an invariable and speedy degeneracy in the princes of the royal house, the effeminate nurslings of the seraglio succeeding to the warrior-sovereigns reared in the camp, and by the internal anarchy and insurrections which indicate and accelerate the decline and fall of these unwieldy and ill-organised fabrics of power. It is also a striking fact that the governments of all the great Asiatic empires have in all ages been absolute despotisms. And Heeren is right in connecting this with another great fact, which is important from its influence both on the political and the social life of Asiatics. "Among all the considerable nations of Inner Asia the paternal government of every household was corrupted by polygamy: where that custom exists, a good political constitution is impossible. Fathers being converted into domestic despots, are ready to pay the same abject obedience to their sovereign which they exact from their family and dependants in their domestic economy." We should bear in mind also the inseparable connexion between the

state religion and all legislation which has always prevailed in the East, and the constant existence of a powerful sacerdotal body, exercising some check, though precarious and irregular, over the throne itself, grasping at all civil administration, claiming the supreme control of education, stereotyping the lines in which literature and science must move, and limiting the extent to which it shall be lawful for the human mind to prosecute its enquiries.

With these general characteristics rightly felt and understood, it becomes a comparatively easy task to investigate and appreciate the origin, progress, and principles of Oriental empires in general, as well as of the Persian monarchy in particular. And we are thus better enabled to appreciate the repulse which Greece gave to the arms of the East, and to judge of the probable consequences to human civilization, if the Persians had succeeded in bringing Europe under their yoke, as they had already subjugated the fairest portions of the rest of the then known world.

The Greeks, from their geographical position, formed the natural vanguard of European liberty against Persian ambition; and they preeminently displayed the salient points of distinctive national character which have rendered European civilization so far superior to Asiatic. The nations

that dwelt in ancient times around and near the northern shores of the Mediterranean sea, were the first in our continent to receive from the East the rudiments of art and literature, and the germs of social and political organizations. Of these nations the Greeks, through their vicinity to Asia Minor, Phœnicia, and Egypt, were among the very foremost in acquiring the principles and habits of civilized life; and they also at once imparted a new and wholly original stamp on all which they received. Thus, in their religion they received from foreign settlers the names of all their deities and many of their rites, but they discarded the loathsome monstrosities of the Nile, the Orontes, and the Ganges;—they nationalized their creed; and their own poets created their beautiful mythology. No sacerdotal caste ever existed in Greece. So, in their governments, they lived long under hereditary kings, but never endured the permanent establishment of absolute monarchy. Their early kings were constitutional rulers, governing with defined prerogatives.\* And long before the Persian invasion the kingly form of government had given way in almost all the Greek states to republican institutions, presenting infinite varieties of the blending

\* *Ἐπὶ ῥητοῖς γέραςι πατρικὰ βασιλείαι.*—*THUCYD.* lib. i. sec. 13.



or the alternate predominance of the oligarchical and democratical principles. In literature and science the Greek intellect followed no beaten track, and acknowledged no limitary rules. The Greeks thought their subjects boldly out; and the novelty of a speculation invested it in their minds with interest and not with criminality. Versatile, restless, enterprising and self-confident, the Greeks presented the most striking contrast to the habitual quietude and submissiveness of the Orientals. And, of all the Greeks, the Athenians exhibited these national characteristics in the strongest degree. This spirit of activity and daring, joined to a generous sympathy for the fate of their fellow-Greeks in Asia, had led them to join in the last Ionian war; and now mingling with their abhorrence of the usurping family of their own citizens, which for a period had forcibly seized on and exercised despotic power at Athens, nerved them to defy the wrath of King Darius, and to refuse to receive back at his bidding the tyrant whom they had some years before driven out.

The enterprise and genius of an Englishman have lately confirmed by fresh evidence, and invested with fresh interest, the might of the Persian monarch who sent his troops to combat at Marathon. Inscriptions in a character termed the Arrow-headed, or Cuneiform, had long been known

to exist on the marble monuments at Persepolis, near the site of the ancient Susa, and on the faces of rocks in other places formerly ruled over by the early Persian kings. But for thousands of years they had been mere unintelligible enigmas to the curious but baffled beholder; and they were often referred to as instances of the folly of human pride, which could indeed write its own praises in the solid rock, but only for the rock to outlive the language as well as the memory of the vainglorious inscribers. The elder Niebuhr, Grotefend, and Lassen, had made some guesses at the meaning of the Cuneiform letters; but Major Rawlinson, of the East India Company's service, after years of labour, has at last accomplished the glorious achievement of fully revealing the alphabet and the grammar of this long unknown tongue. He has, in particular, fully decyphered and expounded the inscription on the sacred rock of Behistun, on the western frontiers of Media. These records of the Achæmenidæ have at length found their interpreter; and Darius himself speaks to us from the consecrated mountain, and tells us the names of the nations that obeyed him, the revolts that he suppressed, his victories, his piety, and his glory.\*

\* See the tenth volume of the "Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society."

Kings who thus seek the admiration of posterity are little likely to dim the record of their successes by the mention of their occasional defeats; and it throws no suspicion on the narrative of the Greek historians, that we find these inscriptions silent respecting the overthrow of Datis and Artaphernes, as well as respecting the reverses which Darius sustained in person during his Scythian campaigns. But these indisputable monuments of Persian fame confirm, and even increase the opinion with which Herodotus inspires us of the vast power which Cyrus founded, and Cambyses increased; which Darius augmented by Indian and Arabian conquests, and seemed likely, when he directed his arms against Europe, to make the predominant monarchy of the world.

With the exception of the Chinese empire, in which, throughout all ages down to the last few years, one-third of the human race has dwelt almost unconnected with the other portions, all the great kingdoms, which we know to have existed in ancient Asia, were, in Darius's time, blended into the Persian. The northern Indians, the Assyrians, the Syrians, the Babylonians, the Chaldees, the Phœnicians, the nations of Palestine, the Armenians, the Bactrians, the Lydians, the Phrygians, the Parthians, and the Medes,—all obeyed the sceptre of the Great King: the Medes

standing next to the native Persians in honour, and the empire being frequently spoken of as that of the Medes, or as that of the Medes and Persians. Egypt and Cyrene were Persian provinces; the Greek colonists in Asia Minor and the islands of the Ægæan were Darius's subjects; and their gallant but unsuccessful attempts to throw off the Persian yoke had only served to rivet it more strongly, and to increase the general belief that the Greeks could not stand before the Persians in a field of battle. Darius's Scythian war, though unsuccessful in its immediate object, had brought about the subjugation of Thrace, and the submission of Macedonia. From the Indus to the Peneus, all was his.

We may imagine the wrath with which the lord of so many nations must have heard nine years before the battle of Marathon, that a strange nation towards the setting sun, called the Athenians, had dared to help his rebels in Ionia against him, and that they had plundered and burnt the capital of one of his provinces. Before the burning of Sardis, Darius seems never to have heard of the existence of Athens; but his satraps in Asia Minor had for some time seen Athenian refugees at their provincial courts imploring assistance against their fellow-countrymen. When Hippias was driven away from Athens, and the

tyrannic dynasty of the Pisistratidæ finally overthrown in 510, B.C., the banished tyrant and his adherents, after vainly seeking to be restored by Spartan intervention, had betaken themselves to Sardis, the capital city of the satrapy of Artaphernes. There Hippias (in the expressive words of Herodotus\*) began every kind of agitation, slandering the Athenians before Artaphernes, and doing all he could to induce the satrap to place Athens in subjection to him, as the tributary vassal of King Darius. When the Athenians heard of his practices, they sent envoys to Sardis to remonstrate with the Persians against taking up the quarrel of the Athenian refugees.

But Artaphernes gave them in reply a menacing command to receive Hippias back again if they looked for safety. The Athenians were resolved not to purchase safety at such a price, and after rejecting the satrap's terms, they considered that they and the Persians were declared enemies. At this very crisis the Ionian Greeks implored the assistance of their European brethren, to enable them to recover their independence from Persia. Athens, and the city of Eretria in Eubœa, alone consented. Twenty Athenian galleys, and five Eretrian, crossed the Ægæan Sea, and by a bold and sudden march upon Sardis, the Athenians and

\* Herod. lib. v. c. 96.

their allies succeeded in capturing the capital city of the haughty satrap, who had recently menaced them with servitude or destruction. They were pursued, and defeated on their return to the coast, and Athens took no further part in the Ionian war; but the insult that she had put upon the Persian power was speedily made known throughout that empire, and was never to be forgiven or forgotten. In the emphatic simplicity of the narrative of Herodotus, the wrath of the Great King is thus described:—"Now when it was told to King Darius that Sardis had been taken and burnt by the Athenians and Ionians, he took small heed of the Ionians, well knowing who they were, and that their revolt would soon be put down: but he asked who, and what manner of men, the Athenians were. And when he had been told, he called for his bow; and, having taken it, and placed an arrow on the string, he let the arrow fly towards heaven; and as he shot it into the air, he said, 'Oh! Supreme God, grant me that I may avenge myself on the Athenians.' And when he had said this, he appointed one of his servants to say to him every day as he sat at meat, 'Sire, remember the Athenians.'"

Some years were occupied in the complete reduction of Ionia. But when this was effected, Darius ordered his victorious forces to proceed to punish

Athens and Eretria, and to conquer European Greece. The first armament sent for this purpose was shattered by shipwreck, and nearly destroyed off Mount Athos. But the purpose of King Darius was not easily shaken. A larger army was ordered to be collected in Cilicia, and requisitions were sent to all the maritime cities of the Persian empire for ships of war, and for transports of sufficient size for carrying cavalry as well as infantry across the Ægæan. While these preparations were being made, Darius sent heralds round to the Grecian cities demanding their submission to Persia. It was proclaimed in the market-place of each little Hellenic state (some with territories not larger than the Isle of Wight), that King Darius, the lord of all men, from the rising to the setting sun,\* required earth and water to be delivered to his heralds, as a symbolical acknowledgment that he was head and master of the country. Terror-stricken at the power of Persia and at the severe punishment that had recently been inflicted on the refractory Ionians, many of the continental Greeks and nearly all the islanders

\* Æschines in Ctes. p. 522, ed. Reiske. Mitford, vol. i. p. 485. Æschines is speaking of Xerxes, but Mitford is probably right in considering it as the style of the Persian kings in their proclamations. In one of the inscriptions at Persepolis, Darius terms himself "Darius, the great king, king of

submitted, and gave the required tokens of vassalage. At Sparta and Athens an indignant refusal was returned:—a refusal which was disgraced by outrage and violence against the persons of the Asiatic heralds.

Fresh fuel was thus added to the anger of Darius against Athens, and the Persian preparations went on with renewed vigour. In the summer of 490, B.C., the army destined for the invasion was assembled in the Aleian plain of Cilicia, near the sea. A fleet of six hundred galleys and numerous transports was collected on the coast for the embarkation of troops, horse as well as foot. A Median general named Datis, and Artaphernes, the son of the satrap of Sardis, and who was also nephew of Darius, were placed in titular joint command of the expedition. The real supreme authority was probably given to Datis alone, from the way in which the Greek writers speak of him. We know no details of the previous career of this officer; but there is every reason to believe that his abilities and bravery had been proved by experience, or his Median birth would have prevented his being

kings, the king of the many peopled countries, the supporter also of this great world." In another, he styles himself, "the king of all inhabited countries." (See "*Asiatic Journal*," vol. x. p. 287 and 292, and Major Rawlinson's Comments.)



placed in high command by Darius. He appears to have been the first Mede, who was thus trusted by the Persian kings after the overthrow of the conspiracy of the Median Magi against the Persians immediately before Darius obtained the throne. Datis received instructions to complete the subjugation of Greece, and especial orders were given him with regard to Eretria and Athens. He was to take these two cities, and he was to lead the inhabitants away captive, and bring them as slaves into the presence of the Great King.

Datis embarked his forces in the fleet that awaited them, and coasting along the shores of Asia Minor till he was off Samos, he thence sailed due westward through the *Ægean* Sea for Greece, taking the islands in his way. The Naxians had, ten years before, successfully stood a siege against a Persian armament, but they now were too terrified to offer any resistance, and fled to the mountain-tops, while the enemy burnt their town, and laid waste their lands. Thence Datis, compelling the Greek islanders to join him with their ships and men, sailed onward to the coast of Eubœa. The little town of Carystus essayed resistance, but was quickly overpowered. He next attacked Eretria. The Athenians sent four thousand men to its aid; but treachery was at

work among the Eretrians; and the Athenian force received timely warning from one of the leading men of the city to retire to aid in saving their own country, instead of remaining to share in the inevitable destruction of Eretria. Left to themselves the Eretrians repulsed the assaults of the Persians against their walls for six days; on the seventh they were betrayed by two of their chiefs, and the Persians occupied the city. The temples were burnt in revenge for the firing of Sardis, and the inhabitants were bound, and placed as prisoners in the neighbouring islet of Ægylia, to wait there till Datis should bring the Athenians to join them in captivity, when both populations were to be led into upper Asia, there to learn their doom from the lips of King Darius himself.

Flushed with success, and with half his mission thus accomplished, Datis reembarked his troops, and crossing the little channel that separates Eubœa from the mainland, he encamped his troops on the Attic coast at Marathon, drawing up his galleys on the shelving beach, as was the custom with the navies of antiquity. The conquered islands behind him served as places of deposit for his provisions and military stores. His position at Marathon seemed to him in every respect advantageous; and the level nature of

the ground on which he camped was favourable for the employment of his cavalry, if the Athenians should venture to engage him. Hippias, who accompanied him, and acted as the guide of the invaders, had pointed out Marathon as the best place for a landing, for this very reason. Probably Hippias was also influenced by the recollection that forty-seven years previously, he, with his father Pisistratus, had crossed with an army from Eretria to Marathon, and had won an easy victory over their Athenian enemies on that very plain, which had restored them to tyrannic power. The omen seemed cheering. The place was the same; but Hippias soon learned to his cost how great a change had come over the spirit of the Athenians.

But though "the fierce democracy" of Athens was zealous and true against foreign invader and domestic tyrant, a faction existed in Athens, as at Eretria, who were willing to purchase a party-triumph over their fellow-citizens at the price of their country's ruin. Communications were opened between these men and the Persian camp, which would have led to a catastrophe like that of Eretria, if Miltiades had not resolved and persuaded his colleagues to resolve on fighting at all hazards.

When Miltiades arrayed his men for action,

he staked on the arbitrement of one battle not only the fate of Athens, but that of all Greece; for if Athens had fallen, no other Greek state, except Lacedæmon, would have had the courage to resist; and the Lacedæmonians, though they would probably have died in their ranks to the last man, never could have successfully resisted the victorious Persians and the numerous Greek troops which would have soon marched under the Persian satraps, had they prevailed over Athens.

Nor was there any power to the westward of Greece that could have offered an effectual opposition to Persia, had she once conquered Greece, and made that country a basis for future military operations. Rome was at this time in her season of utmost weakness. Her dynasty of powerful Etruscan kings had been driven out; and her infant commonwealth was reeling under the attacks of the Etruscans and Volscians from without, and the fierce dissensions between the patricians and plebeians within. Etruria, with her Lucumos and serfs, was no match for Persia. Samnium had not grown into the might which she afterwards put forth: nor could the Greek colonies in South Italy and Sicily hope to conquer when their parent states had perished. Carthage had escaped the Persian yoke in the time of Cambyzes, through the reluctance of the

Phœnician mariners to serve against their kinsmen. But such forbearance could not long have been relied on, and the future rival of Rome would have become as submissive a minister of the Persian power as were the Phœnician cities themselves. If we turn to Spain ; or if we pass the great mountain chain, which, prolonged through the Pyrenees, the Cevennes, the Alps, and the Balkan, divides Northern from Southern Europe, we shall find nothing at that period but mere savage Finns, Celts, Slaves, and Teutons. Had Persia beaten Athens at Marathon, she could have found no obstacle to prevent Darius, the chosen servant of Ormuzd, from advancing his sway over all the known Western races of mankind. The infant energies of Europe would have been trodden out beneath universal conquest ; and the history of the world, like the history of Asia, have become a mere record of the rise and fall of despotic dynasties, of the incursions of barbarous hordes, and of the mental and political prostration of millions beneath the diadem, the tiara, and the sword.

Great as the preponderance of the Persian over the Athenian power at that crisis seems to have been, it would be unjust to impute wild rashness to the policy of Miltiades, and those who voted with him in the Athenian

council of war, or to look on the after-current of events as the mere fortunate result of successful folly. As before has been remarked, Miltiades, whilst prince of the Chersonese, had seen service in the Persian armies; and he knew by personal observation how many elements of weakness lurked beneath their imposing aspect of strength. He knew that the bulk of their troops no longer consisted of the hardy shepherds and mountaineers from Persia Proper and Kurdistan, who won Cyrus's battles; but that unwilling contingents from conquered nations now filled up the Persian muster-rolls, fighting more from compulsion than from any zeal in the cause of their masters. He had also the sagacity and the spirit to appreciate the superiority of the Greek armour and organization over the Asiatic, notwithstanding former reverses. Above all, he felt and worthily trusted the enthusiasm of those whom he led.

The Athenians whom he led, had proved by their new-born valour in recent wars against the neighbouring states, that "Liberty and Equality of civic rights are brave spirit-stirring things: and they who, while under the yoke of a despot, had been no better men of war than any of their neighbours, as soon as they were free, became the foremost men of all; for each felt that in

fighting for a free commonwealth, he fought for himself, and whatever he took in hand, he was zealous to do the work thoroughly." So the nearly contemporaneous historian describes the change of spirit that was seen in the Athenians after their tyrants were expelled;\* and Miltiades knew that in leading them against the invading army, where they had Hippias, the foe they most hated, before them, he was bringing into battle no ordinary men, and could calculate on no ordinary heroism. As for traitors, he was sure, that whatever treachery might lurk among some of the higher-born and wealthier Athenians, the rank and file whom he commanded were ready to do their utmost in his and their own cause. With regard to future attacks from Asia, he might

\* 'Αθηναῖοι μὲν νῦν ἠβέηοντο· δημοῖ δὲ οὐ κατ' ἐν μόνον ἀλλὰ πανταχῇ ἢ Ἰσηγορίῃ ὥς ἔστι χρῆμα σπουδαῖον, εἰ καὶ Ἀθηναῖοι τυραννεύμενοι μὲν οὐδαμοῦ τῶν σφέας περιοικούντων ἔσαν τὰ πολέμα ἀμείνους, ἀπαλλάχθentes δὲ τυράννων μακρῷ πρῶτοι ἐγένοντο· δημοῖ ὦν ταῦτα ὅτι κατεχόμενοι μὲν ἐβελokaέον, ὥς δεσπότη ἐργαζόμενοι· ἐλευθερωθέντων δὲ αὐτὸς ἕκαστος ἐωντῷ προθυμέτο κατεργάζεσθαι.—HEROD. lib. v. c. 87.

Mr. Grote's comment on this is one of the most eloquent and philosophical passages in his admirable Fourth Volume.

The expression Ἰσηγορίῃ χρῆμα σπουδαῖον is like some lines in old Barbour's poem of "The Bruce."

"Ah, Fredome is a noble thing;  
Fredome makes man to haiff lyking.  
Fredome all solace to men gives,  
He lives at ease, that freely lives."

reasonably hope that one victory would inspire all Greece to combine against the common foe; and that the latent seeds of revolt and disunion in the Persian empire would soon burst forth and paralyze its energies, so as to leave Greek independence secure.

With these hopes and risks, Miltiades, on the afternoon of a September day, 490, B.C., gave the word for the Athenian army to prepare for battle. There were many local associations connected with those mountain-heights, which were calculated powerfully to excite the spirits of the men, and of which the commanders well knew how to avail themselves in their exhortations to their troops before the encounter. Marathon itself was a region sacred to Hercules. Close to them was the fountain of Macaria, who had in days of yore devoted herself to death for the liberty of her people. The very plain, on which they were to fight, was the scene of the exploits of their national hero, Theseus; and there, too, as old legends told, the Athenians and the Heraclidæ had routed the invader, Eurystheus. These traditions were not mere cloudy myths, or idle fictions, but matters of implicit earnest faith to the men of that day, and many a fervent prayer arose from the Athenian ranks to the heroic Spirits who while on earth had striven and suffered on that very spot, and



who were believed to be now heavenly powers, looking down with interest on their still beloved country, and capable of interposing with super-human aid in its behalf.

According to old national custom the warriors of each tribe were arrayed together; neighbour thus fighting by the side of neighbour, friend by friend, and the spirit of emulation and the consciousness of responsibility excited to the very utmost. The War-Ruler, Callimachus, had the leading of the right wing; the Plateæans formed the extreme left; and Themistocles and Aristides commanded the centre. The line consisted of the heavy-armed spearmen only. For the Greeks (until the time of Iphicrates) took little or no account of light-armed soldiers in a pitched battle, using them only in skirmishes, or for the pursuit of a defeated enemy. The panoply of the regular infantry consisted of a long spear, of a shield, helmet, breast-plate, greaves, and short sword. Thus equipped, they usually advanced slowly and steadily into action in an uniform phalanx of about eight spears deep. But the military genius of Miltiades led him to deviate on this occasion from the commonplace tactics of his countrymen. It was essential for him to extend his line so as to cover all the practicable ground, and to secure himself from being outflanked and charged in the rear by the

Persian horse. This extension involved the weakening of his line. Instead of an uniform reduction of its strength, he determined on detaching principally from his centre, which, from the nature of the ground, would have the best opportunities for rallying, if broken ; and on strengthening his wings so as to insure advantage at those points ; and he trusted to his own skill, and to his soldiers' discipline, for the improvement of that advantage into decisive victory.\*

In this order, and availing himself probably of the inequalities of the ground, so as to conceal his preparations from the enemy till the last possible moment, Miltiades drew up the eleven thousand infantry, whose spears were to decide this crisis in the struggle between the European and the Asiatic worlds. The sacrifices, by which the favour of heaven was sought, and its will consulted, were announced to show propitious omens. The trumpet sounded for action, and, chanting the hymn of battle, the little army bore down upon the host of the foe. Then, too, along the mountain slopes of Marathon must have resounded the

\* It is remarkable that there is no other instance of a Greek general deviating from the ordinary mode of bringing a phalanx of spearmen into action, until the battles of Leuctra and Mantinea, more than a century after Marathon, when Epaminondas introduced the tactics which Alexander the

mutual exhortation, which Æschylus, who fought in both battles, tells us was afterwards heard over the waves of Salamis,—“On, sons of the Greeks! Strike for the freedom of your country,—strike for the freedom of your children, and of your wives,—for the shrines of your fathers’ gods, and for the sepulchres of your sires. All—all are now staked upon the strife.”

ὦ παῖδες Ἑλλήνων, ἴτε  
 Ἐλευθεροῦτε πατρίδ’, ἔλευθεροῦτε δὲ  
 Παῖδας, γυναῖκας, θεῶν τε πατρώων ἔδη,  
 Θήκας τε προγόνων. Νῦν ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀγών.\*

Instead of advancing at the usual slow pace of the phalanx, Miltiades brought his men on at a run. They were all trained in the exercises of the palæstra, so that there was no fear of their ending the charge in breathless exhaustion; and it was of the deepest importance for him to traverse as rapidly as possible the mile or so of level ground, that lay between the mountain foot and the Persian outposts, and so to get his troops into close action before the Asiatic cavalry

Great in ancient times, and Frederic the Great in modern times made so famous, of concentrating an overpowering force to bear on some decisive point of the enemy’s line, while he kept back, or in military phrase, refused the weaker part of his own.

\* “Persæ,” 402.

could mount, form, and manœuvre against him, or their archers keep him long under fire, and before the enemy's generals could fairly deploy their masses.

"When the Persians," says Herodotus, "saw the Athenians running down on them, without horse or bowmen, and scanty in numbers, they thought them a set of madmen rushing upon certain destruction." They began, however, to prepare to receive them, and the Eastern chiefs arrayed, as quickly as time and place allowed, the varied races who served in their motley ranks. Mountaineers from Hyrcania and Affghanistan, wild horsemen from the steppes of Khorassan, the black archers of Ethiopia, swordsmen from the banks of the Indus, the Oxus, the Euphrates, and the Nile, made ready against the enemies of the Great King. But no national cause inspired them, except the division of native Persians; and in the large host there was no uniformity of language, creed, race, or military system. Still, among them there were many gallant men, under a veteran general; they were familiarized with victory, and in contemptuous confidence their infantry, which alone had time to form, awaited the Athenian charge. On came the Greeks, with one unwavering line of levelled spears, against which the light targets, the short

lances and scymetars, of the Orientals offered weak defence. The front rank of the Asiatics must have gone down to a man at the first shock. Still they recoiled not, but strove by individual gallantry, and by the weight of numbers, to make up for the disadvantages of weapons and tactics, and to bear back the shallow line of the Europeans. In the centre, where the native Persians and the Sacæ fought, they succeeded in breaking through the weakened part of the Athenian phalanx; and the tribes led by Aristides and Themistocles were, after a brave resistance, driven back over the plain, and chased by the Persians up the valley towards the inner country. There the nature of the ground gave the opportunity of rallying and renewing the struggle: and, meanwhile, the Greek wings, where Miltiades had concentrated his chief strength, had routed the Asiatics opposed to them; and the Athenian and Platæan officers, instead of pursuing the fugitives, kept their troops well in hand, and wheeling round they formed the two wings together. Miltiades instantly led them against the Persian centre, which had hitherto been triumphant, but which now fell back, and prepared to encounter these new and unexpected assailants. Aristides and Themistocles renewed the fight with their re-organized troops, and the full force of the Greeks

was brought into close action with the Persian and Sacian divisions of the enemy. Datis's veterans strove hard to keep their ground, and evening\* was approaching before the stern encounter was decided.

But the Persians with their slight wicker shields, destitute of body-armour, and never taught by training to keep the even front and act with the regular movement of the Greek infantry, fought at heavy disadvantage with their shorter and feebler weapons against the compact array of well-armed Athenian and Platæan spearmen, all perfectly drilled to perform each necessary evolution in concert, and to preserve an uniform and unwavering line in battle. In personal courage and in bodily activity the Persians were not inferior to their adversaries. Their spirits were not yet cowed by the recollection of former defeats; and they lavished their lives freely, rather than forfeit the fame which they had won by so many victories. While their rear-ranks poured an incessant shower of arrows† over the heads of their comrades, the foremost Persians

\* 'Ἄλλ' ὅμως ἀπωσόμεσθα ξὺν θεοῖς πρὸς ἐσπέρα.

ARISTOPH. *Vespæ*, 1086.

† Ἐμαχόμεσθ' αὐτοῖσι, θῦμον ὀξύνῃν πεπωκότες,  
Στὰς ἀνὴρ παρ' ἀνδρ', ὑπ' ὀργῆς τὴν χελεύην ἐσθίων  
'Υπὸ δὲ τῶν τοξευμάτων οὐκ ἦν ἰδεῖν τὸν οὐρανόν.

ARISTOPH. *Vespæ*, 1082.

kept rushing forward, sometimes singly, sometimes in desperate groups of twelve or ten upon the projecting spears of the Greeks, striving to force a lane into the phalanx, and to bring their scymetars and daggers into play.\* But the Greeks felt their superiority, and though the fatigue of the long continued action told heavily on their inferior numbers, the sight of the carnage that they dealt upon their assailants nerved them to fight still more fiercely on.

At last the previously unvanquished lords of Asia turned their backs and fled, and the Greeks followed, striking them down, to the water's edge,† where the invaders were now hastily launching

\* See the description in the 62nd section of the ninth book of Herodotus of the gallantry shown by the Persian infantry against the Lacedæmonians at Platæa. We have no similar detail of the fight at Marathon, but we know that it was long and obstinately contested (see the 113th section of the sixth book of Herodotus, and the lines from the *Vespæ* already quoted), and the spirit of the Persians must have been even higher at Marathon than at Platæa. In both battles it was only the true Persians and the Sacæ, who showed this valour: the other Asiatics fled like sheep.

† The flying Mede, his shaftless broken bow;  
The fiery Greek, his red pursuing spear;  
Mountains above, Earth's, Ocean's plain below,  
Death in the front, Destruction in the rear!  
Such was the scene.—BYRON'S *Childe Harold*.

their galleys, and seeking to embark and fly. Flushed with success, the Athenians attacked and strove to fire the fleet. But here the Asiatics resisted desperately, and the principal loss sustained by the Greeks was in the assault on the ships. Here fell the brave War-Ruler, Callimachus, the general Stesilaus, and other Athenians of note. Seven galleys were fired; but the Persians succeeded in saving the rest. They pushed off from the fatal shore; but even here the skill of Datis did not desert him, and he sailed round to the western coast of Attica, in hopes to find the city unprotected, and to gain possession of it from some of the partizans of Hippias. Miltiades, however, saw and counteracted his manœuvre. Leaving Aristides, and the troops of his tribe, to guard the spoil and the slain, the Athenian commander led his conquering army by a rapid night-march back across the country to Athens. And when the Persian fleet had doubled the Cape of Sunium and sailed up to the Athenian harbour in the morning, Datis saw arrayed on the heights above the city the troops before whom his men had fled on the preceding evening. All hope of further conquest in Europe for the time was abandoned, and the baffled armada returned to the Asiatic coasts.

After the battle had been fought, but while



the dead bodies were yet on the ground, the promised reinforcement from Sparta arrived. Two thousand Lacedæmonian spearmen starting immediately after the full moon, had marched the hundred and fifty miles between Athens and Sparta in the wonderfully short time of three days. Though too late to share in the glory of the action, they requested to be allowed to march to the battle-field to behold the Medes. They proceeded thither, gazed on the dead bodies of the invaders, and then, praising the Athenians and what they had done, they returned to Lacedæmon.

The number of the Persian dead was six thousand four hundred; of the Athenians a hundred and ninety-two. The number of the Plataeans who fell is not mentioned, but as they fought in the part of the army which was not broken, it cannot have been large.

The apparent disproportion between the losses of the two armies is not surprising when we remember the armour of the Greek spearmen, and the impossibility of heavy slaughter being inflicted by sword or lance on troops so armed, as long as they kept firm in their ranks.\*

\* Mitford well refers to Crecy, Poitiers, and Agincourt, as instances of similar disparity of loss between the conquerors and the conquered.

The Athenian slain were buried on the field of battle. This was contrary to the usual custom, according to which the bones of all who fell fighting for their country in each year were deposited in a public sepulchre in the suburb of Athens called the Cerameicus. But it was felt that a distinction ought to be made in the funeral honours paid to the men of Marathon, even as their merit had been distinguished over that of all other Athenians. A lofty mound was raised on the plain of Marathon, beneath which the remains of the men of Athens who fell in the battle were deposited. Ten columns were erected on the spot, one for each of the Athenian tribes; and on the monumental column of each tribe were graven the names of those of its members whose glory it was to have fallen in the great battle of liberation. The antiquarian Pausanias read those names there six hundred years after the time when they were first graven.\* The

\* Pausanias states, with implicit belief, that the battle-field was haunted at night by supernatural beings, and that the noise of combatants and the snorting of horses were heard to resound on it. The superstition has survived the change of creeds, and the shepherds of the neighbourhood still believe that spectral warriors contend on the plain at midnight, and they say that they have heard the shouts of the combatants and the neighing of the steeds.—See Grote and Thirlwall.

columns have long perished, but the mound still marks the spot where the noblest heroes of antiquity, the *Μαραθωνόμαχοι* repose.

A separate tumulus was raised over the bodies of the slain Plataeans, and another over the light armed slaves who had taken part and had fallen in the battle.\* There was also a separate funeral monument to the general, to whose genius the victory was mainly due. Miltiades did not live long after his achievement at Marathon, but he lived long enough to experience a lamentable reverse of his popularity and success. As soon as the Persians had quitted the western coasts of the *Ægean*, he proposed to an assembly of the Athenian people that they should fit out seventy galleys, with a proportionate force of soldiers and military stores, and place it at his disposal: not telling them whither he meant to lead it, but promising them that if they would equip the force he asked for, and give him discretionary powers, he would lead it to a land where there was gold in abundance to be won with ease. The Greeks of that time believed in the existence of Eastern realms teeming with gold, as firmly as the Europeans of the sixteenth century believed

\* It is probable that the Greek light-armed irregulars were active in the attack on the Persian ships, and it was in this attack that the Greeks suffered their principal loss.

in Eldorado of the West. The Athenians probably thought that the recent victor of Marathon, and former officer of Darius, was about to lead them on a secret expedition against some wealthy and unprotected cities of treasure in the Persian dominions. The armament was voted and equipped, and sailed eastward from Attica, no one but Miltiades knowing its destination, until the Greek isle of Paros was reached, when his true object appeared. In former years, while connected with the Persians as prince of the Chersonese, Miltiades had been involved in a quarrel with one of the leading men among the Parians, who had injured his credit and caused some slights to be put upon him at the court of the Persian satrap Hydarnes. The feud had ever since rankled in the heart of the Athenian chief, and he now attacked Paros for the sake of avenging himself on his ancient enemy. His pretext, as general of the Athenians, was that the Parians had aided the armament of Datis with a war-galley. The Parians pretended to treat about terms of surrender, but used the time which they thus gained in repairing the defective parts of the fortifications of their city, and they then set the Athenians at defiance. So far, says Herodotus, the accounts of all the Greeks agree. But the Parians in after years

told also a wild legend, how a captive priestess of a Parian temple of the Deities of the Earth, promised Miltiades to give him the means of capturing Paros: — how, at her bidding, the Athenian general went alone at night and forced his way into a holy shrine, near the city gate, but with what purpose it was not known:—how a supernatural awe came over him, and in his flight he fell and fractured his leg: — how an oracle afterwards forbade the Parians to punish the sacrilegious and traitorous priestess, “Because it was fated that Miltiades should come to an ill end, and she was only the instrument to lead him to evil.” Such was the tale that Herodotus heard at Paros. Certain it was that Miltiades either dislocated or broke his leg during an unsuccessful siege of the city, and returned home in evil plight with his baffled and defeated forces.

The indignation of the Athenians was proportionate to the hope and excitement which his promises had raised. Xanthippus the head of one of the first families in Athens, indicted him before the supreme popular tribunal for the capital offence of having deceived the people. His guilt was undeniable, and the Athenians passed their verdict accordingly. But the recollections of Lemnos and Marathon, and the sight of the fallen general, who lay stretched on a couch before them, pleaded suc-

cessfully in mitigation of punishment, and the sentence was commuted from death to a fine of fifty talents. This was paid by his son, the afterwards illustrious Cimon, Miltiades dying, soon after the trial, of the injury which he had received at Paros.\*

The melancholy end of Miltiades after his elevation to such a height of power and glory,

\* The common-place calumnies against the Athenians respecting Miltiades have been well answered by Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer in his "Rise and Fall of Athens," and Bishop Thirlwall in the second volume of his "History of Greece;" but they have received their most complete refutation from Mr. Grote in the 4th volume of his History, p. 490 et seq., and notes. I quite concur with him that, "looking to the practice of the Athenian dicastery in criminal cases that fifty talents was the minor penalty actually proposed by the defenders of Miltiades themselves as a substitute for the punishment of death. In those penal cases at Athens, where the punishment was not fixed beforehand by the terms of the law, if the person accused was found guilty, it was customary to submit to the jurors subsequently and separately, the question as to amount of punishment. First, the accuser named the penalty which he thought suitable; next, the accused person was called upon to name an amount of penalty for himself, and the jurors were constrained to take their choice between these two; no third gradation of penalty being admissible for consideration. Of course, under such circumstances, it was the interest of the accused party to name, even in his own case, some real and serious penalty, something which the jurors might be likely to deem not wholly inadequate to his crime just proved; for if he proposed some penalty only trifling, he drove them to prefer the heavier sentence recommended by his opponent." The stories of Miltiades having been cast

must often have been recalled to the minds of the ancient Greeks, by the sight of one in particular of the memorials of the great battle which he won. This was the remarkable statue (minutely described by Pausanias), which the Athenians, in the time of Pericles, caused to be hewn out of a huge block of marble which, it was believed, had been provided by Datis, to form a trophy of the anticipated victory of the Persians. Phidias fashioned out of this a colossal image of the goddess Nemesis; the deity, whose peculiar function was, to visit the exuberant prosperity both of nations and individuals with sudden and awful reverses. This statue was placed in a temple of the goddess at Rhamnus, about eight miles from

into prison and died there, and of his having been saved from death only by the interposition of the Prytanis of the day are, I think, rightly rejected by Mr. Grote as the fictions of after ages. The silence of Herodotus respecting them is decisive. It is true that Plato, in the *Gorgias*, says that the Athenians passed a vote to throw Miltiades into the *Barathrum*, and speaks of the interposition of the Prytanis in his favour; but it is to be remembered that Plato, with all his transcendent genius, was (as Niebuhr has termed him) a very indifferent patriot, who loved to blacken the character of his country's democratical institutions; and if the fact was that the Prytanis, at the trial of Miltiades, opposed the vote of capital punishment, and spoke in favour of the milder sentence, Plato, in a passage (written to show the misfortunes that befell Athenian statesmen) would readily exaggerate this fact into the story that appears in his text.

**Marathon.** Athens itself contained numerous memorials of her primary great victory. Panenus, the cousin of Phidias, represented it in fresco on the walls of the painted porch; and, centuries afterwards, the figures of Miltiades and Callimachus at the head of the Athenians were conspicuous in the fresco. The tutelary deities were exhibited taking part in the fray. In the background were seen the Phœnician galleys, and, nearer to the spectator, the Athenians and the Platæans (distinguished by their leather helmets) were chasing routed Asiatics into the marshes and the sea. The battle was sculptured also on the Temple of Victory in the Acropolis, and even now there may be traced on the frieze the figures of the Persian combatants with their lunar shields, their bows and quivers, their curved scymetars, their loose trowsers, and Phrygian tiaras.\*

These and other memorials of Marathon were the produce of the meridian age of Athenian intellectual splendour, of the age of Phidias and Pericles. For it was not merely by the generation whom the battle liberated from Hippias and the Medes, that the transcendant importance of their victory was gratefully recognised. Through the whole epoch of her prosperity, through the long Olympiads of her decay, through centuries

\* Wordsworth's "Greece," p. 115.



after her fall, Athens looked back on the day of Marathon as the brightest of her national existence.

By a natural blending of patriotic pride with grateful piety the very spirits of the Athenians who fell at Marathon were deified by their countrymen. The inhabitants of the district of Marathon paid religious rites to them; and orators solemnly invoked them in their most impassioned adjurations before the assembled men of Athens. "Nothing was omitted that could keep alive the remembrance of a deed which had first taught the Athenian people to know its own strength, by measuring it with the power which had subdued the greater part of the known world. The consciousness thus awakened fixed its character, its station, and its destiny; it was the spring of its later great actions and ambitious enterprizes."\*

It was not indeed by one defeat, however signal, that the pride of Persia could be broken, and her dreams of universal empire dispelled. Ten years afterwards she renewed her attempts upon Europe on a grander scale of enterprise, and was repulsed by Greece with greater and reiterated loss. Larger forces and heavier slaughter, than had been seen at Marathon, signalised the conflicts of Greeks and Persians at Artemisium, Salamis,

\* Thirlwall.

Platæa, and the Eurymedon. But mighty and momentous as these battles were, they rank not with Marathon in importance. They originated no new impulse. They turned back no current of fate. They were merely confirmatory of the already existing bias which Marathon had created. The day of Marathon is the critical epoch in the history of the two nations. It broke for ever the spell of Persian invincibility, which had previously paralysed men's minds. It generated among the Greeks the spirit which beat back Xerxes, and afterwards led on Xenophon, Agesilaus, and Alexander, in terrible retaliation through their Asiatic campaigns. It secured for mankind the intellectual treasures of Athens, the growth of free institutions, the liberal enlightenment of the Western world, and the gradual ascendancy for many ages of the great principles of European civilization.

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EXPLANATORY REMARKS ON SOME OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE BATTLE OF MARATHON.

NOTHING is said by Herodotus of the Persian cavalry taking any part in the battle, although he mentions that Hippias recommended the Persians to land at Marathon, because the plain was

favourable for cavalry evolutions. In the life of Miltiades, which is usually cited as the production of Cornelius Nepos, but which I believe to be of no authority whatever, it is said that Miltiades protected his flanks from the enemy's horse by an abattis of felled trees. While he was on the high ground he would not have required this defence, and it is not likely that the Persians would have allowed him to erect it on the plain.

Bishop Thirlwall calls our attention to a passage in Suidas, where the proverb *Χῶρις ἰππεῖς* is said to have originated from some Ionian Greeks who were serving compulsorily in the army of Datis, contriving to inform Miltiades that the Persian cavalry had gone away, whereupon Miltiades immediately joined battle and gained the victory. There may probably be a gleam of truth in this legend. If Datis's cavalry was numerous, as the abundant pastures of Eubœa were close at hand, the Persian general, when he thought, from the inaction of his enemy, that they did not mean to come down from the heights and give battle, might naturally send the larger part of his horse back across the channel to the neighbourhood of Eretria, where he had already left a detachment, and where his military stores must have been deposited. The knowledge of such a move-

ment would of course confirm Miltiades in his resolution to bring on a speedy engagement.

But, in truth, whatever amount of cavalry we suppose Datis to have had with him on the day of Marathon, their inaction in the battle is intelligible, if we believe the attack of the Athenian spearmen to have been as sudden as it was rapid. The Persian horse-soldier, on an alarm being given, had to take the shackles off his horse, to strap the saddle on, and bridle him, besides equipping himself (See Xenoph. "Anab." lib. iii. c. 4.): and when each individual horseman was ready, the line had to be formed; and the time that it takes to form the Oriental cavalry in line for a charge has, in all ages, been observed by Europeans.

The wet state of the marshes at each end of the plain, in the time of year when the battle was fought, has been adverted to by Mr. Wordsworth, and this would hinder the Persian general from arranging and employing his horsemen on his extreme wings, while it also enabled the Greeks, as they came forward, to occupy the whole breadth of the practicable ground with an unbroken line of levelled spears, against which, if any Persian horse advanced, they would be driven back in confusion upon their own foot.

Even numerous and fully-arrayed bodies of cavalry have been repeatedly broken, both in

ancient and modern warfare, by resolute charges of infantry. For instance, it was by an attack of some picked cohorts, that Cæsar routed the Pompeian cavalry (which had previously defeated his own), and won the battle of Pharsalia.

I have represented the battle of Marathon as beginning in the afternoon and ending towards evening. If it had lasted all day, Herodotus would have probably mentioned that fact. That it ended towards evening is, I think, proved by the line from the "Vespæ," which I have already quoted, and to which my attention was called by Sir Edward Bulwer's account of the battle. I think that the succeeding lines in Aristophanes, also already quoted, justify the description which I have given of the rear-ranks of the Persians keeping up a fire of arrows over the heads of their comrades, as the Normans did at Hastings.

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SYNOPSIS OF EVENTS BETWEEN THE BATTLE OF  
MARATHON, B.C. 490, AND THE DEFEAT OF THE  
ATHENIANS AT SYRACUSE, B.C. 413.

B.C. 490 to 487. All Asia filled with the preparations made by King Darius for a new expedition against Greece. Themistocles persuades

the Athenians to leave off dividing the proceeds of their silver mines among themselves, and to employ the money in strengthening their navy.

487. Egypt revolts from the Persians, and delays the expedition against Greece.

485. Darius dies, and Xerxes his son becomes King of Persia in his stead.

484. The Persians recover Egypt.

480. Xerxes invades Greece. Indecisive actions between the Persian and Greek fleets at Artemisium. Destruction of the three hundred Spartans at Thermopylæ. The Athenians abandon Attica and go on shipboard. Great naval victory of the Greeks at Salamis. Xerxes returns to Asia leaving a chosen army under Mardonius, to carry on the war against the Greeks.

478. Mardonius and his army destroyed by the Greeks at Platæa. The Greeks land in Asia Minor, and defeat a Persian force at Mycalé. In this and the following years the Persians lose all their conquests in Europe, and many on the coast of Asia.

477. Many of the Greek maritime states take Athens as their leader, instead of Sparta.

466. Victories of Cimon over the Persians at the Eurymedon.

464. Revolt of the Helots against Sparta. Third Messenian war.

460. Egypt again revolts against Persia. The Athenians send a powerful armament to aid the Egyptians, which, after gaining some successes, is destroyed: and Egypt submits. This war lasted six years.

457. Wars in Greece between the Athenian and several Peloponnesian states. Immense exertions of Athens at this time. "There is an original inscription still preserved in the Louvre, which attests the energies of Athens at this crisis, when Athens, like England in modern wars, at once sought conquests abroad, and repelled enemies at home. At the period we now advert to (B.C. 457) an Athenian armament of two hundred galleys was engaged in a bold though unsuccessful expedition against Egypt. The Athenian crews had landed, had won a battle; they had then re-embarked and sailed up the Nile, and were busily besieging the Persian garrison in Memphis. As the complement of a trireme galley was at least two hundred men, we cannot estimate the forces then employed by Athens against Egypt at less than forty thousand men. At the same time she kept squadrons on the coasts of Phœnicia and Cyprus, and yet maintained a home-fleet that enabled her to defeat her Peloponnesian enemies at Cecryphalæ and Ægina, capturing in the last engagement seventy

galleys. This last fact may give us some idea of the strength of the Athenian home-fleet that gained the victory: and by adopting the same ratio of multiplying whatever number of galleys we suppose to have been employed, by two hundred, so as to gain the aggregate number of the crews, we may form some estimate of the forces which this little Greek state then kept on foot. Between sixty and seventy thousand men must have served in her fleets during that year. Her tenacity of purpose was equal to her boldness of enterprise. Sooner than yield or withdraw from any of their expeditions, the Athenians at this very time, when Corinth sent an army to attack their garrison at Megara, did not recall a single crew or a single soldier from Ægina or from abroad; but the lads and old men, who had been left to guard the city, fought and won a battle against these new assailants. The inscription which we have referred to, is graven on a votive tablet to the memory of the dead, erected in that year by the Erecthean tribe, one of the ten into which the Athenians were divided. It shows, as Thirlwall has remarked, 'that the Athenians were conscious of the greatness of their own effort;' and in it this little civic community of the ancient world still 'records to us with emphatic simplicity, that its slain fell in Cyprus, in



Egypt, in Phœnicia, at Haliæ, in Ægina, and in Megara, *in the same year*."\*

445. A thirty years' truce concluded between Athens and Lacedæmon.

440. The Samians endeavour to throw off the supremacy of Athens. Samos completely reduced to subjection. Pericles is now sole director of the Athenian councils.

431. Commencement of the great Peloponnesian war, in which Sparta at the head of nearly all the Peloponnesian states, and aided by the Bœotians and some of the other Greeks beyond the Isthmus, endeavours to reduce the power of Athens, and to restore independence to the Greek maritime states who were the subject allies of Athens. At the commencement of the war the Peloponnesian armies repeatedly invade and ravage Attica, but Athens herself is impregnable, and her fleets secure her the dominion of the sea.

430. Athens visited by a pestilence, which, sweeps off large numbers of her population.

425. The Athenians gain great advantages over the Spartans at Sphacteria, and by occupying Cythera; but they suffer a severe defeat in Bœotia, and the Spartan general, Brasidas, leads an expedition to the Thracian coasts and con-

\* Pæans of the Athenian Navy.

quers many of the most valuable Athenian possessions in those regions.

421. Nominal truce for thirty years between Athens and Sparta, but hostilities continue on the Thracian coast and in other quarters.

415. The Athenians send an expedition to conquer Sicily.

## CHAPTER II.

## DEFEAT OF THE ATHENIANS AT SYRACUSE,

B.C. 413.

The Romans knew not, and could not know, how deeply the greatness of their own posterity, and the fate of the whole Western world, were involved in the destruction of the fleet of Athens in the harbour of Syracuse. Had that great expedition proved victorious, the energies of Greece during the next eventful century would have found their field in the West no less than in the East ; Greece, and not Rome might have conquered Carthage ; Greek instead of Latin might have been at this day the principal element of the language of Spain, of France, and of Italy ; and the laws of Athens, rather than of Rome, might be the foundation of the law of the civilized world.—ARNOLD.

Few cities have undergone more memorable sieges during ancient and mediæval times than has the city of Syracuse. Athenian, Carthaginian, Roman, Vandal, Byzantine, Saracen, and Norman, have in turns beleaguered her walls ; and the resistance which she successfully opposed to some of her early assailants, was of the deepest importance, not only to the fortunes of the generations then in being, but to all the subsequent




current of human events. To adopt the eloquent expressions of Arnold respecting the check which she gave to the Carthaginian arms, "Syracuse was a breakwater, which God's providence raised up to protect the yet immature strength of Rome." And her triumphant repulse of the great Athenian expedition against her was of even more widespread and enduring importance. It forms a decisive epoch in the strife for universal empire, in which all the great states of antiquity successively engaged and failed.

The present city of Syracuse is a place of little or no military strength; as the fire of artillery from the neighbouring heights would almost completely command it. But in ancient warfare its position, and the care bestowed on its walls, rendered it formidably strong against the means of offence, which then were employed by besieging armies.

The ancient city, in its most prosperous times, was chiefly built on the knob of land which projects into the sea on the eastern coast of Sicily, between two bays; one of which, to the north, was called the bay of Thapsus, while the southern one formed the great harbour of the city of Syracuse itself. A small island, or peninsula (for such it soon was rendered), lies at the south-eastern extremity of this knob of land, stretching

almost entirely across the mouth of the great harbour, and rendering it nearly land-locked. This island comprised the original settlement of the first Greek colonists from Corinth, who founded Syracuse two thousand five hundred years ago; and the modern city has shrunk again into these primary limits. But, in the fifth century before our era, the growing wealth and population of the Syracusans had led them to occupy and include within their city-walls portion after portion of the mainland lying next to the little isle, so that at the time of the Athenian expedition the seaward part of the land between the two bays already spoken of was built over, and fortified from bay to bay, and constituted the larger part of Syracuse.

The landward wall, therefore, of this district of the city, traversed this knob of land, which continues to slope upwards from the sea, and which to the west of the old fortifications (that is, towards the interior of Sicily) rises rapidly for a mile or two, but diminishes in width, and finally terminates in a long narrow ridge, between which and Mount Hybla a succession of chasms and uneven low ground extends. On each flank of this ridge the descent is steep and precipitous from its summits to the strips of level land that lie immediately below it, both to the south-west and north-west.



The usual mode of assailing fortified towns in the time of the Peloponnesian war was to build a double wall round them, sufficiently strong to check any sally of the garrison from within, or any attack of a relieving force from without. The interval within the two walls of the circumvallation was roofed over, and formed barracks, in which the besiegers posted themselves, and awaited the effects of want or treachery among the besieged in producing a surrender. And, in every Greek city of those days, as in every Italian republic of the middle ages, the rage of domestic sedition between aristocrats and democrats ran high. Rancorous refugees swarmed in the camp of every invading enemy; and every blockaded city was sure to contain within its walls a body of intriguing malcontents, who were eager to purchase a party triumph at the expense of a national disaster. Famine and faction were the allies on whom besiegers relied. The generals of that time trusted to the operation of these sure confederates as soon as they could establish a complete blockade. They rarely ventured on the attempt to storm any fortified post. For, the military engines of antiquity were feeble in breaching masonry, before the improvements which the first Dionysius effected in the mechanics of destruction; and the lives of spearmen the boldest and most highly-trained

would, of course, have been idly spent in charges against unshattered walls.

A city built close to the sea, like Syracuse, was impregnable, save by the combined operations of a superior hostile fleet, and a superior hostile army. And Syracuse, from her size, her population, and her military and naval resources, not unnaturally thought herself secure from finding in another Greek city a foe capable of sending a sufficient armament to menace her with capture and subjection. But in the spring of 414 B.C. the Athenian navy was mistress of her harbour, and the adjacent seas; an Athenian army had defeated her troops, and cooped them within the town; and from bay to bay a blockading-wall was being rapidly carried across the strips of level ground and the high ridge outside the city (then termed *Epipolæ*), which, if completed, would have cut the Syracusans off from all succour from the interior of Sicily, and have left them at the mercy of the Athenian generals. The besiegers' works were, indeed, unfinished; but every day the unfortified interval in their lines grew narrower, and with it diminished all apparent hope of safety for the beleaguered town.

Athens was now staking the flower of her forces, and the accumulated fruits of seventy years of glory, on one bold throw for the dominion of the

Western world. As Napoleon from Mount Cœur de Lion pointed to St. Jean d'Acre, and told his staff that the capture of that town would decide his destiny, and would change the face of the world; so, the Athenian officers, from the heights of Epipolæ, must have looked on Syracuse, and felt that with its fall all the known powers of the earth would fall beneath them. They must have felt, also, that Athens, if repulsed there, must pause for ever from her career of conquest, and sink from an imperial republic into a ruined and subservient community.

At Marathon, the first in date of the Great Battles of the World, we beheld Athens struggling for self-preservation against the invading armies of the East. At Syracuse she appears as the ambitious and oppressive invader of others. In her, as in other republics of old and of modern times, the same energy that had inspired the most heroic efforts in defence of the national independence, soon learned to employ itself in daring and unscrupulous schemes of self-aggrandizement at the expense of neighbouring nations. In the interval between the Persian and the Peloponnesian wars she had rapidly grown into a conquering and dominant state, the chief of a thousand tributary cities, and the mistress of the largest and best-manned navy that the Mediterra-

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nean had yet beheld. The occupations of her territory by Xerxes and Mardonius, in the second Persian war, had forced her whole population to become mariners; and the glorious results of that struggle confirmed them in their zeal for their country's service at sea. The voluntary suffrage of the Greek cities of the coasts and islands of the Ægean first placed Athens at the head of the confederation formed for the further prosecution of the war against Persia. But this titular ascendancy was soon converted by her into practical and arbitrary dominion. She protected them from piracy and the Persian power, which soon fell into decrepitude and decay, but she exacted in return implicit obedience to herself. She claimed and enforced a prerogative of taxing them at her discretion; and proudly refused to be accountable for her mode of expending their supplies. Remonstrance against her assessments was treated as factious disloyalty; and refusal to pay was promptly punished as revolt. Permitting and encouraging her subject allies to furnish all their contingents in money, instead of part consisting of ships and men, the sovereign republic gained the double object of training her own citizens by constant and well-paid service in her fleets; and of seeing her confederates lose their skill and discipline by inaction, and become more and more

passive and powerless under her yoke. Their towns were generally dismantled, while the imperial city herself was fortified with the greatest care and sumptuousness: the accumulated revenues from her tributaries serving to strengthen and adorn to the utmost her havens, her docks, her arsenals, her theatres, and her shrines; and to array her in that plenitude of architectural magnificence, the ruins of which still attest the intellectual grandeur of the age and people, which produced a Pericles to plan, and a Phidias to execute.

All republics that acquire supremacy over other nations, rule them selfishly and oppressively. There is no exception to this in either ancient or modern times. Carthage, Rome, Venice, Genoa, Florence, Pisa, Holland, and Republican France, all tyrannized over every province and subject state, where they gained authority. But none of them openly avowed their system of doing so upon principle, with the candour which the Athenian republicans displayed, when any remonstrance was made against the severe exactions which they imposed upon their vassal allies. They avowed that their empire was a tyranny, and frankly stated that they solely trusted to force and terror to uphold it. They appealed to what they called "the eternal law of nature, that the weak should

be coerced by the strong.”\* Sometimes they stated, and not without some truth, that the unjust hatred of Sparta against themselves forced them to be unjust to others in self-defence. To be safe, they must be powerful; and to be powerful, they must plunder and coerce their neighbours. They never dreamed of communicating any franchise, or share in office, to their dependents; but jealously monopolized every post of command, and all political and judicial power; exposing themselves to every risk with unflinching gallantry; embarking readily in every ambitious scheme; and never suffering difficulty or disaster to shake their tenacity of purpose: in the hope of acquiring unbounded empire for their country, and the means of maintaining each of the thirty thousand citizens, who made up the sovereign republic, in exclusive devotion to military occupations, and to those brilliant sciences and arts in which Athens already had reached the meridian of intellectual splendour.

Her great political dramatist speaks of the Athenian empire as comprehending a thousand states. The language of the stage must not be taken too literally; but the number of the dependencies of Athens, at the time when the

\* Ἄεὶ καθεστῶτος τὸν ἦσσω ὑπὸ δυνατωτέρου κατείργεσθαι.  
—THUC. i. 77.

Peloponnesian confederacy attacked her, was undoubtedly very great. With a few trifling exceptions, all the islands of the Ægæan, and all the Greek cities, which in that age fringed the coasts of Asia Minor, the Hellespont, and Thrace, paid tribute to Athens, and implicitly obeyed her orders. The Ægæan sea was an Attic lake. Westward of Greece her influence, though strong, was not equally predominant. She had colonies and allies among the wealthy and populous Greek settlements in Sicily and South Italy, but she had no organized system of confederates in those regions; and her galleys brought her no tribute from the western seas. The extension of her empire over Sicily was the favourite project of her ambitious orators and generals. While her great statesman, Pericles, lived, his commanding genius kept his countrymen under control, and forbade them to risk the fortunes of Athens in distant enterprises, while they had unsubdued and powerful enemies at their own doors. He taught Athens this maxim; but he also taught her to know and to use her own strength, and when Pericles had departed, the bold spirit, which he had fostered, overleaped the salutary limits which he had prescribed. When her bitter enemies, the Corinthians, succeeded, in 431 B.C., in inducing Sparta to attack her, and a con-

federacy was formed of five-sixths of the continental Greeks, all animated by anxious jealousy and bitter hatred of Athens; when armies far superior in numbers and equipment to those which had marched against the Persians, were poured into the Athenian territory, and laid it waste to the city walls; the general opinion was that Athens would be reduced in two or three years at the farthest, to submit to the requisitions of her invaders. But her strong fortifications, by which she was girt and linked to her principal haven, gave her, in those ages, almost all the advantages of an insular position. Pericles had made her trust to her empire of the seas. Every Athenian in those days was a practised seaman. A state, indeed, whose members, of an age fit for service, at no time exceeded thirty thousand, and whose territorial extent did not equal half Sussex, could only have acquired such a naval dominion as Athens once held, by devoting, and zealously training, all its sons to service in its fleets. In order to man the numerous galleys which she sent out, she necessarily employed large numbers of hired mariners and slaves at the oar; but the staple of her crews was Athenian, and all posts of command were held by native citizens. It was by reminding them of this, of their long practice in seamanship, and the certain superiority which

their discipline gave them over the enemy's marine, that their great minister mainly encouraged them to resist the combined power of Lacedæmon and her allies. He taught them that Athens might thus reap the fruit of her zealous devotion to maritime affairs ever since the invasion of the Medes; "she had not, indeed, perfected herself; but the reward of her superior training was the rule of the sea—a mighty dominion, for it gave her the rule of much fair land beyond its waves, safe from the idle ravages with which the Lacedæmonians might harass Attica, but never could subdue Athens."\*

Athens accepted the war with which her enemies threatened her, rather than descend from her pride of place. And though the awful visitation of the Plague came upon her, and swept away more of her citizens than the Dorian spear laid low, she held her own gallantly against her enemies. If the Peloponnesian armies in irresistible strength wasted every spring her corn lands, her vineyards, and her olive groves with fire and sword, she retaliated on their coasts with her fleets; which, if resisted, were only resisted to display the pre-eminent skill and bravery of her seamen. Some of her subject-allies revolted, but the revolts were in general sternly and promptly quelled. The genius of one enemy

\* Thuc. lib. i. sec. 144.

had indeed inflicted blows on her power in Thrace, which she was unable to remedy; but he fell in battle in the tenth year of the war; and with the loss of Brasidas the Lacedæmonians seemed to have lost all energy and judgment. Both sides at length grew weary of the war, and in 421 a truce for fifty years was concluded, which, though ill kept, and though many of the confederates of Sparta refused to recognize it, and hostilities still continued in many parts of Greece, protected the Athenian territory from the ravages of enemies, and enabled Athens to accumulate large sums out of the proceeds of her annual revenues. So also, as a few years passed by, the havoc which the pestilence and the sword had made in her population was repaired; and in 415 B.C. Athens was full of bold and restless spirits, who longed for some field of distant enterprize, wherein they might signalize themselves, and aggrandize the state; and who looked on the alarm of Spartan hostility as a mere old woman's tale. When Sparta had wasted their territory she had done her worst; and the fact of its always being in her power to do so, seemed a strong reason for seeking to increase the transmarine dominion of Athens.

The West was now the quarter towards which the thoughts of every aspiring Athenian were

directed. From the very beginning of the war Athens had kept up an interest in Sicily, and her squadron had, from time to time, appeared on its coasts and taken part in the dissensions in which the Sicilian Greeks were universally engaged one against each other. There were plausible grounds for a direct quarrel, and an open attack by the Athenians upon Syracuse.

With the capture of Syracuse all Sicily, it was hoped, would be secured. Carthage and Italy were next to be attacked. With large levies of Iberian mercenaries she then meant to overwhelm her Peloponnesian enemies. The Persian monarchy lay in hopeless imbecility, inviting Greek invasion; nor did the known world contain the power that seemed capable of checking the growing might of Athens, if Syracuse once could be hers.

The national historian of Rome has left us, as an episode of his great work, a disquisition on the probable effects that would have followed if Alexander the Great had invaded Italy. Posterity has generally regarded that disquisition as proving Livy's patriotism more strongly than his impartiality or acuteness. Yet, right or wrong, the speculations of the Roman writer were directed to the consideration of a very remote possibility. To whatever age Alexander's life might



have been prolonged, the East would have furnished full occupation for his martial ambition, as well as for those schemes of commercial grandeur and imperial amalgamation of nations, in which the truly great qualities of his mind loved to display themselves. With his death the dismemberment of his empire among his generals was certain, even as the dismemberment of Napoleon's empire among his marshals would certainly have ensued, if he had been cut off in the zenith of his power. Rome, also, was far weaker when the Athenians were in Sicily, than she was a century afterwards in Alexander's time. There can be little doubt but that Rome would have been blotted out from the independent powers of the West, had she been attacked at the end of the fifth century, B.C., by an Athenian army, largely aided by Spanish mercenaries, and flushed with triumphs over Sicily and Africa; instead of the collision between her and Greece having been deferred until the latter had sunk into decrepitude, and the Roman Mars had grown into full vigour.

The armament which the Athenians equipped against Syracuse, was in every way worthy of the state which formed such projects of universal empire; and it has been truly termed "the noblest that ever yet had been sent forth by a free and

civilized commonwealth.”\* The fleet consisted of one hundred and thirty-four war-galleys, with a multitude of store ships. A powerful force of the best heavy-armed infantry that Athens and her allies could furnish, was sent on board it, together with a smaller number of slingers and bowmen. The quality of the forces was even more remarkable than the number. The zeal of individuals vied with that of the republic in giving every galley the best possible crew, and every troop the most perfect accoutrements. And with private as well as public wealth eagerly lavished on all that could give splendour as well as efficiency to the expedition, the fated fleet began its voyage for the Sicilian shores in the summer of 415.

The Syracusans themselves, at the time of the Peloponnesian war, were a bold and turbulent democracy, tyrannizing over the weaker Greek cities in Sicily, and trying to gain in that island the same arbitrary supremacy, which Athens maintained along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean. In numbers and in spirit they were fully equal to the Athenians, but far inferior to them in military and naval discipline. When the probability of an Athenian invasion was first publicly discussed at Syracuse, and efforts were made by some of the wiser citizens to improve the state of

\* Arnold's "History of Rome."

the National Defences, and prepare for the impending danger, the rumours of coming war and the proposal for preparation were received by the mass of the Syracusans with scornful incredulity. The speech of one of their popular orators is preserved to us in Thucydides,\* and many of its topics might, by a slight alteration of names and details, serve admirably for the party among ourselves at present, which opposes the augmentation of our forces, and derides the idea of our being in any peril from the sudden attack of a French expedition. The Syracusan orator told his countrymen to dismiss with scorn the visionary terrors which a set of designing men among themselves strove to excite, in order to get power and influence thrown into their own hands. He told them that Athens knew her own interest too well to think of wantonly provoking their hostility: *"Even if the enemies were to come,"* said he, *"so distant from their resources, and opposed to such a power as ours, their destruction would be easy and inevitable. Their ships will have enough to do to get to our island at all, and to carry such stores of all sorts as will be needed. They cannot therefore carry, besides, an army large enough to cope with*

\* Lib. vi. sec. 36, *et seq.* Arnold's edition. I have almost literally transcribed some of the marginal epitomes of the original speech:

*such a population as ours. They will have no fortified place from which to commence their operations, but must rest them on no better base than a set of wretched tents and such means as the necessities of the moment will allow them. But in truth I do not believe that they would even be able to effect a disembarkation. Let us, therefore, set at nought these reports as altogether of home manufacture; and be sure that if any enemy does come, the state will know how to defend itself, in a manner worthy of the national honour."*

Such assertions pleased the Syracusan assembly; and their counterparts find favour now among some portion of the English public. But the invaders of Syracuse came; made good their landing in Sicily; and, if they had promptly attacked the city itself, instead of wasting nearly a year in desultory operations in other parts of Sicily, the Syracusans must have paid the penalty of their self-sufficient carelessness in submission to the Athenian yoke. But, of the three generals who led the Athenian expedition, two only were men of ability, and one was most weak and incompetent. Fortunately for Syracuse, Alcibiades, the most skilful of the three, was soon deposed from his command by a factious and fanatic vote of his fellow-countrymen, and the other competent one, Lamachus, fell early in a skirmish: while,

more fortunately still for her, the feeble and vacillating Nicias remained unrecalled and unhurt, to assume the undivided leadership of the Athenian army and fleet, and to mar by alternate over-caution and over-carelessness, every chance of success which the early part of the operations offered. Still, even under him, the Athenians nearly won the town. They defeated the raw levies of the Syracusans, cooped them within the walls, and, as before-mentioned, almost effected a continuous fortification from bay to bay over Epipolæ, the completion of which would certainly have been followed by a capitulation.

Alcibiades, the most complete example of genius without principle that history produces, the Bolingbroke of antiquity, but with high military talents superadded to diplomatic and oratorical powers, on being summoned home from his command in Sicily to take his trial before the Athenian tribunal, had escaped to Sparta; and had exerted himself there with all the selfish rancour of a renegade to renew the war with Athens, and to send instant assistance to Syracuse.

When we read his words in the pages of Thucydides (who was himself an exile from Athens at this period, and may probably have been at Sparta, and heard Alcibiades speak), we are at a loss whether most to admire or abhor his subtle

and traitorous counsels. After an artful exordium, in which he tried to disarm the suspicions which he felt must be entertained of him, and to point out to the Spartans how completely his interests and theirs were identified, through hatred of the Athenian democracy, he thus proceeded:—

“Hear me, at any rate, on the matters which require your grave attention, and which I, from the personal knowledge that I have of them, can and ought to bring before you. We Athenians sailed to Sicily with the design of subduing, first the Greek cities there, and next those in Italy. Then we intended to make an attempt on the dominions of Carthage, and on Carthage itself.\* If all these projects succeeded (nor did we limit ourselves to them in these quarters), we intended to increase our fleet with the inexhaustible supplies of ship timber which Italy affords, to put in requisition the whole military force of the conquered Greek states, and also to hire large armies of the barbarians, of the Iberians,† and others

\* Arnold, in his notes on this passage, well reminds the reader that Agathocles, with a Greek force far inferior to that of the Athenians at this period, did, some years afterwards, very nearly conquer Carthage.

† It will be remembered that Spanish infantry were the staple of the Carthaginian armies. Doubtless Alcibiades and other leading Athenians had made themselves acquainted with the Carthaginian system of carrying on war, and meant to

in those regions, who are allowed to make the best possible soldiers. *Then*, when we had done all this, we intended to assail Peloponnesus with our collected force. Our fleets would blockade you by sea, and desolate your coasts; our armies would be landed at different points and assail your cities. Some of these we expected to storm,\* and others we meant to take by surrounding them with fortified lines. We thought that it would thus be an easy matter thoroughly to war you down: and then we should become the masters of the whole Greek race. As for expense, we reckoned that each conquered state would give us supplies of money and provisions sufficient to pay for its own conquest, and furnish the means for the conquest of its neighbours.

“Such are the designs of the present Athenian expedition to Sicily, and you have heard them from the lips of the man, who, of all men living, is most accurately acquainted with them. The other Athenian generals, who remain with the

adopt it. With the marvellous powers which Alcibiades possessed of ingratiating himself with men of every class and every nation, and his high military genius, he would have been as formidable a chief of an army of *condottieri*, as Hannibal afterwards was.

\* Alcibiades here alluded to Sparta itself, which was unfortified. His Spartan hearers must have glanced round them at these words, with mixed alarm and indignation.

expedition, will endeavour to carry out these plans. And be sure that without your speedy interference they will all be accomplished. The Sicilian Greeks are deficient in military training; but still if they could at once be brought to combine in an organized resistance to Athens, they might even now be saved. But as for the Syracusans resisting Athens by themselves, they have already with the whole strength of their population fought a battle and been beaten; they cannot face the Athenians at sea; and it is quite impossible for them to hold out against the force of their invaders. And if this city falls into the hands of the Athenians, all Sicily is theirs, and presently Italy also: and the danger, which I warned you of from that quarter, will soon fall upon yourselves. You must therefore in Sicily fight for the safety of Peloponnesus. Send some galleys thither instantly. Put men on board who can work their own way over, and who, as soon as they land, can do duty as regular troops. But above all, let one of yourselves, let a man of Sparta go over to take the chief command, to bring into order and effective discipline the forces that are in Syracuse, and urge those, who at present hang back, to come forward and aid the Syracusans. The presence of a Spartan general at this crisis will do more to save the city, than



a whole army."\* The renegade then proceeded to urge on them the necessity of encouraging their friends in Sicily, by showing that they themselves were in earnest in hostility to Athens. He exhorted them not only to march their armies into Attica again, but to take up a permanent fortified position in the country: and he gave them in detail information of all that the Athenians most dreaded, and how his country might receive the most distressing and enduring injury at their hands.

The Spartans resolved to act on his advice, and appointed Gylippus to the Sicilian command. Gylippus was a man, who, to the national bravery and military skill of a Spartan, united political sagacity that was worthy of his great fellow countryman Brasidas; but his merits were debased by mean and sordid vices; and his is one of the cases in which history has been austere just, and where little or no fame has been accorded to the successful but venal soldier. But for the purpose for which he was required in Sicily, an abler man could not have been found in Lacedæmon. His country gave him neither men nor money, but she gave him her authority; and the influence of her name and of his own talents was speedily seen in the zeal with which the Corinthians and other

\* Thuc. lib. vi. sec. 90, 91.

Peloponnesian Greeks began to equip a squadron to act under him for the rescue of Sicily. As soon as four galleys were ready, he hurried over with them to the southern coast of Italy, and there, though he received such evil tidings of the state of Syracuse, that he abandoned all hope of saving that city, he determined to remain on the coast, and do what he could in preserving the Italian cities from the Athenians.

So nearly indeed had Nicias completed his beleaguering lines, and so utterly desperate had the state of Syracuse seemingly become, that an assembly of the Syracusans was actually convened, and they were discussing the terms on which they should offer to capitulate, when a galley was seen dashing into the great harbour, and making her way towards the town with all the speed which her rowers could supply. From her shunning the part of the harbour where the Athenian fleet lay, and making straight for the Syracusan side, it was clear that she was a friend; the enemy's cruisers, careless through confidence of success, made no attempt to cut her off; she touched the beach, and a Corinthian captain springing on shore from her, was eagerly conducted to the assembly of the Syracusan people, just in time to prevent the fatal vote being put for a surrender.

Providentially for Syracuse, Gongylus, the com-

mander of the galley, had been prevented by an Athenian squadron from following Gylippus to South Italy, and he had been obliged to push direct for Syracuse from Greece.

The sight of actual succour, and the promise of more, revived the drooping spirits of the Syracusans. They felt that they were not left desolate to perish, and the tidings that a Spartan was coming to command them, confirmed their resolution to continue their resistance. Gylippus was already near the city. He had learned at Locri that the first report which had reached him of the state of Syracuse was exaggerated; and that there was unfinished space in the besiegers' lines through which it was barely possible to introduce reinforcements into the town. Crossing the straits of Messina, which the culpable negligence of Nicias had left unguarded, Gylippus landed on the northern coast of Sicily, and there began to collect from the Greek cities an army, of which the regular troops that he brought from Peloponnesus, formed the nucleus. Such was the influence of the name of Sparta,\* and such were his own abilities and activity, that he succeeded in raising

\* The effect of the presence of a Spartan officer on the troops of the other Greeks, seems to have been like the effect of the presence of an English officer upon native Indian troops.

a force of about two thousand fully armed infantry, with a larger number of irregular troops. Nicias, as if infatuated, made no attempt to counteract his operations, nor, when Gylippus marched his little army towards Syracuse, did the Athenian commander endeavour to check him. The Syracusans marched out to meet him; and while the Athenians were solely intent on completing their fortifications on the southern side towards the harbour, Gylippus turned their position by occupying the high ground in the extreme rear of Epipolæ. He then marched through the unfortified interval of Nicias's lines into the besieged town; and joining his troops with the Syracusan forces, after some engagements with varying success, gained the mastery over Nicias, drove the Athenians from Epipolæ, and hemmed them into a disadvantageous position in the low grounds near the great harbour.

The attention of all Greece was now fixed on Syracuse; and every enemy of Athens felt the importance of the opportunity now offered of checking her ambition, and, perhaps, of striking a deadly blow at her power. Large reinforcements from Corinth, Thebes, and other cities, now reached the Syracusans; while the baffled and dispirited Athenian general earnestly besought his countrymen to recall him, and represented the further prosecution of the siege as hopeless.

But Athens had made it a maxim never to let difficulty or disaster drive her back from any enterprise once undertaken, so long as she possessed the means of making any effort, however desperate, for its accomplishment. With indomitable pertinacity she now decreed, instead of recalling her first armament from before Syracuse, to send out a second, though her enemies near home had now renewed open warfare against her, and by occupying a permanent fortification in her territory, had severely distressed her population, and were pressing her with almost all the hardships of an actual siege. She still was mistress of the sea, and she sent forth another fleet of seventy galleys, and another army, which seemed to drain almost the last reserves of her military population, to try if Syracuse could not yet be won, and the honour of the Athenian arms be preserved from the stigma of a retreat. Hers was, indeed, a spirit that might be broken but never would bend. At the head of this second expedition, she wisely placed her best general, Demosthenes, one of the most distinguished officers that the long Peloponnesian war had produced, and who, if he had originally held the Sicilian command, would soon have brought Syracuse to submission.

The fame of Demosthenes, the general, has



been dimmed by the superior lustre of his great countryman, Demosthenes the orator. When the name of Demosthenes is mentioned, it is the latter alone that is thought of. The soldier has found no biographer. Yet out of the long list of great men whom the Athenian republic produced, there are few that deserve to stand higher than this brave, though finally unsuccessful, leader of her fleets and armies in the first half of the Peloponnesian war. In his first campaign in Ætolia he had shown some of the rashness of youth, and had received a lesson of caution by which he profited throughout the rest of his career, but without losing any of his natural energy in enterprise or in execution. He had performed the distinguished service of rescuing Naupactus from a powerful hostile armament in the seventh year of the war; he had then, at the request of the Acarnanian republics, taken on himself the office of commander-in-chief of all their forces, and at their head he had gained some important advantages over the enemies of Athens in western Greece. His most celebrated exploits had been the occupation of Pylos on the Messenian coast, the successful defence of that place against the fleet and armies of Lacedæmon, and the subsequent capture of the Spartan forces on the isle of Sphacteria; which was the severest blow

dealt to Sparta throughout the war, and which had mainly caused her to humble herself to make the truce with Athens. Demosthenes was as honourably unknown in the war of party politics at Athens, as he was eminent in the war against the foreign enemy. We read of no intrigues of his on either the aristocratic or democratic side. He was neither in the interest of Nicias, nor of Cleon. His private character was free from any of the stains which polluted that of Alcibiades. On all these points the silence of the comic dramatist is decisive evidence in his favour. He had also the moral courage, not always combined with physical, of seeking to do his duty to his country, irrespective of any odium that he himself might incur, and unhampered by any petty jealousy of those who were associated with him in command. There are few men named in ancient history of whom posterity would gladly know more, or whom we sympathise with more deeply in the calamities that befell them, than Demosthenes the son of Alcisthenes, who in the spring of the year 413 B.C. left Piræus at the head of the second Athenian expedition against Sicily.

His arrival was critically timed; for Gylippus had encouraged the Syracusans to attack the Athenians under Nicias by sea as well as by land, and by one able stratagem of Ariston, one



of the admirals of the Corinthian auxiliary squadron, the Syracusans and their confederates had inflicted on the fleet of Nicias the first defeat that the Athenian navy had ever sustained from a numerically inferior enemy. Gylippus was preparing to follow up his advantage by fresh attacks on the Athenians on both elements, when the arrival of Demosthenes completely changed the aspect of affairs, and restored the superiority to the invaders. With seventy-three war-galleys in the highest state of efficiency, and brilliantly equipped, with a force of five thousand picked men of the regular infantry of Athens and her allies, and a still larger number of bow-men, javelin-men, and slingers on board, Demosthenes rowed round the great harbour with loud cheers and martial music, as if in defiance of the Syracusans and their confederates. His arrival had indeed changed their newly born hopes into the deepest consternation. The resources of Athens seemed inexhaustible, and resistance to her hopeless. They had been told that she was reduced to the last extremities, and that her territory was occupied by an enemy; and yet here they saw her sending forth, as if in prodigality of power, a second armament to make foreign conquests, not inferior to that with which Nicias had first landed on the Sicilian shores.

With the intuitive decision of a great com-



mander, Demosthenes at once saw that the possession of Epipolæ was the key to the possession of Syracuse, and he resolved to make a prompt and vigorous attempt to recover that position, while his force was unimpaired, and the consternation which its arrival had produced among the besieged, remained unabated. The Syracusans and their allies had run out an outwork along Epipolæ from the city walls, intersecting the fortified lines of circumvallation which Nicias had commenced, but from which he had been driven by Gylippus. Could Demosthenes succeed in storming this outwork, and in re-establishing the Athenian troops on the high ground, he might fairly hope to be able to resume the circumvallation of the city, and become the conqueror of Syracuse: for, when once the besiegers' lines were completed, the number of the troops with which Gylippus had garrisoned the place, would only tend to exhaust the stores of provisions, and accelerate its downfall.

An easily-repelled attack was first made on the outwork in the day-time, probably more with the view of blinding the besieged to the nature of the main operations, than with any expectation of succeeding in an open assault, with every disadvantage of the ground to contend against. But, when the darkness had set in, Demosthenes



formed his men in columns, each soldier taking with him five days' provisions, and the engineers and workmen of the camp following the troops with their tools, and all portable implements of fortification, so as at once to secure any advantage of ground that the army might gain. Thus equipped and prepared, he led his men along by the foot of the southern flank of Epipolæ, in a direction towards the interior of the island, till he came immediately below the narrow ridge that forms the extremity of the high ground looking westward. He then wheeled his vanguard to the right, sent them rapidly up the paths that wind along the face of the cliff, and succeeded in completely surprising the Syracusan outposts, and in placing his troops fairly on the extreme summit of the all-important Epipolæ. Thence the Athenians marched eagerly down the slope towards the town, routing some Syracusan detachments that were quartered in their way, and vigorously assailing the unprotected side of the outwork. All at first favoured them. The outwork was abandoned by its garrison, and the Athenian engineers began to dismantle it. In vain Gylippus brought up fresh troops to check the assault; the Athenians broke and drove them back, and continued to press hotly forward, in the full confidence of victory. But, amid the general

consternation of the Syracusans and their confederates, one body of infantry stood firm. This was a brigade of their Bœotian allies, which was posted low down the slope of Epipolæ outside the city walls. Coolly and steadily the Bœotian infantry formed their line, and, undismayed by the current of flight around them, advanced against the advancing Athenians. This was the crisis of the battle. But the Athenian van was disorganized by its own previous successes; and, yielding to the unexpected charge thus made on it by troops in perfect order, and of the most obstinate courage, it was driven back in confusion upon the other divisions of the army, that still continued to press forward. When once the tide was thus turned, the Syracusans passed rapidly from the extreme of panic to the extreme of vengeful daring, and with all their forces they now fiercely assailed the embarrassed and receding Athenians. In vain did the officers of the latter strive to re-form their line. Amid the din and the shouting of the fight, and the confusion inseparable upon a night engagement, especially one where many thousand combatants were pent and whirled together in a narrow and uneven area, the necessary manœuvres were impracticable; and though many companies still fought on desperately, wherever the moonlight showed

them the semblance of a foe,\* they fought without concert or subordination; and not unfrequently, amid the deadly chaos, Athenian troops assailed each other. Keeping their ranks close, the Syracusans and their allies prest on against the disorganized masses of the besiegers, and at length drove them, with heavy slaughter, over the cliffs, which an hour or two before they had scaled full of hope, and apparently certain of success.

This defeat was decisive of the event of the siege. The Athenians afterwards struggled only to protect themselves from the vengeance which the Syracusans sought to wreak in the complete destruction of their invaders. Never, however, was vengeance more complete and terrible. A series of sea-fights followed, in which the Athenian galleys were utterly destroyed or captured. The mariners and soldiers who escaped death in disastrous engagements, and a vain attempt to force a retreat into the interior of the island, became prisoners of war; Nicias and Demosthenes were

\* Ἦν μὲν γὰρ σελήνη λαμπρά, ἑώρων δὲ οὕτως ἀλλήλους, ὥς ἐν σελήνῃ εἰκὸς τὴν μὲν ὄψιν τοῦ σώματος προορᾶν τὴν δὲ γῶσιν τοῦ οἰκείου ἀπιστεῖσθαι.—THUC. lib. vii. 44. Compare Tacitus's description of the night engagement in the civil war between Vespasian and Vitellius. "Neutro inclinaverat fortuna, donec adultâ nocte, luna ostenderet acies, fulleretque."—*Hist.* lib. iii. sec. 23.

put to death in cold blood, and their men either perished miserably in the Syracusan dungeons, or were sold into slavery to the very persons whom, in their pride of power, they had crossed the seas to enslave.

All danger from Athens to the independent nations of the West was now for ever at an end. She, indeed, continued to struggle against her combined enemies and revolted allies with unparalleled gallantry; and many more years of varying warfare passed away before she surrendered to their arms. But no success in subsequent contests could ever have restored her to the pre-eminence in enterprise, resources, and maritime skill, which she had acquired before her fatal reverses in Sicily. Nor among the rival Greek republics, whom her own rashness aided to crush her, was there any capable of reorganizing her empire, or resuming her schemes of conquest. The dominion of Western Europe was left for Rome and Carthage to dispute two centuries later, in conflicts still more terrible, and with even higher displays of military daring and genius, than Athens had witnessed either in her rise, her meridian, or her fall.

SYNOPSIS OF THE EVENTS BETWEEN THE DEFEAT  
OF THE ATHENIANS AT SYRACUSE, AND THE BAT-  
TLE OF ARBELA.

412. B.C. Many of the subject-allies of Athens revolt from her, on her disasters before Syracuse being known; the seat of war is transferred to the Hellespont and eastern side of the Ægæan.

410. The Carthaginians attempt to make conquests in Sicily.

407. Cyrus the younger is sent by the king of Persia to take the government of all the maritime parts of Asia Minor, and with orders to help the Lacedæmonian fleet against the Athenian.

406. Agrigentum taken by the Carthaginians.

405. The last Athenian fleet destroyed by Lysander at Ægospotami. Athens closely besieged. Rise of the power of Dionysius at Syracuse.

404. Athens surrenders. End of the Peloponnesian war. The ascendancy of Sparta complete throughout Greece.

403. Thrasybulus, aided by the Thebans and with the connivance of one of the Spartan kings, liberates Athens from the Thirty Tyrants, and restores the democracy.

401. Cyrus the Younger commences his expedition into Upper Asia to dethrone his brother Artaxerxes Mnemon. He takes with him an auxiliary force of ten thousand Greeks. He is killed in battle at Cunaxa, and the ten thousand, led by Xenophon, effect their retreat in spite of the Persian armies and the natural obstacles of their march.

399. In this, and the five following years, the Lacedæmonians under Agesilaus and other commanders, carry on war against the Persian satraps in Asia Minor.

396. Syracuse besieged by the Carthaginians, and successfully defended by Dionysius.

394. Rome makes her first great stride in the career of conquest by the capture of Veii.

393. The Athenian admiral, Conon, in conjunction with the Persian satrap Pharnabazus, defeats the Lacedæmonian fleet off Cnidus, and restores the fortifications of Athens. Several of the former allies of Sparta in Greece, carry on hostilities against her.

388. The nations of northern Europe now first appear in authentic history. The Gauls overrun great part of Italy and burn Rome. Rome recovers from the blow, but her old enemies the Æquians and Volscians are left completely crushed by the Gallic invaders.

387. The peace of Antalcidas is concluded among the Greeks by the mediation, and under the sanction, of the Persian king.

378 to 361. Fresh wars in Greece. Epaminondas raises Thebes to be the leading state of Greece, and the supremacy of Sparta is destroyed at the battle of Leuctra. Epaminondas is killed in gaining the victory of Mantinea, and the power of Thebes falls with him. The Athenians attempt a balancing system between Sparta and Thebes.

359. Philip becomes king of Macedon.

357. The Social War breaks out in Greece, and lasts three years. Its result checks the attempt of Athens to regain her old maritime empire.

356. Alexander the Great is born.

343. Rome begins her wars with the Samnites : they extend over a period of fifty years. The end of this obstinate contest is to secure for her the dominion of Italy.

340. Fresh attempts of the Carthaginians upon Syracuse. Timoleon defeats them with great slaughter.

338. Philip defeats the confederate armies of Athens and Thebes at Chæronea, and the Macedonian supremacy over Greece is firmly established.

336. Philip is assassinated, and Alexander the Great becomes king of Macedon. He gains several



**104 SYNOPSIS OF INTERVENING EVENTS.**

victories over the northern barbarians who had attacked Macedonia, and destroys Thebes, which, in conjunction with Athens, had taken up arms against the Macedonians.

**334. Alexander passes the Hellespont.**

## CHAPTER III.

## THE BATTLE OF ARBELA, B.C. 331.

Alexander deserves the glory which he has enjoyed for so many centuries and among all nations : but what if he had been beaten at Arbela, having the Euphrates, the Tigris, and the deserts in his rear, without any strong places of refuge, nine hundred leagues from Macedonia !—NAPOLEON.

Asia beheld with astonishment and awe the uninterrupted progress of a hero, the sweep of whose conquests was as wide and rapid as that of her own barbaric kings, or of the Scythian or Chaldean hordes ; but, far unlike the transient whirlwinds of Asiatic warfare, the advance of the Macedonian leader was no less deliberate than rapid : at every step the Greek power took root, and the language and the civilization of Greece were planted from the shores of the *Ægean* to the banks of the Indus, from the Caspian and the great Hyrcanian plain to the cataracts of the Nile ; to exist actually for nearly a thousand years, and in their effects to endure for ever.—ARNOLD.

A LONG and not unimportant list might be made out of illustrious men, whose characters have been vindicated during recent times from aspersions which for centuries had been thrown on them. The spirit of modern inquiry, and the tendency of modern scholarship, both of which are often said to be solely negative and destructive, have, in

truth, restored to splendour, and almost created anew, far more than they have assailed with censure, or dismissed from consideration as unreal. The truth of many a brilliant narrative of brilliant exploits has of late years been triumphantly demonstrated ; and the shallowness of the sceptical scoffs with which little minds have carped at the great minds of antiquity, has been in many instances, decisively exposed. The laws, the politics, and the lines of action adopted or recommended by eminent men and powerful nations have been examined with keener investigation, and considered with more comprehensive judgment than formerly were brought to bear on these subjects. The result has been at least as often favourable as unfavourable to the persons and the states so scrutinized ; and many an oft-repeated slander against both measures and men has thus been silenced, we may hope for ever.

The veracity of Herodotus, the pure patriotism of Pericles, of Demosthenes, and of the Gracchi, the wisdom of Clisthenes and of Licinius as constitutional reformers, may be mentioned as facts which recent writers have cleared from unjust suspicion and censure. And it might be easily shown that the defensive tendency, which distinguishes the present and recent great writers of Germany, France, and England, has been

equally manifested in the spirit in which they have treated the heroes of thought and heroes of action, who lived during what we term the Middle Ages, and whom it was so long the fashion to sneer at or neglect.

The name of the victor of Arbela has led to these reflections; for, although the rapidity and extent of Alexander's conquests have through all ages challenged admiration and amazement, the grandeur of genius which he displayed in his schemes of commerce, civilization, and of comprehensive union and unity among nations, has, until lately, been comparatively unhonoured. This long continued depreciation was of early date. The ancient rhetoricians,—a class of babblers, a school for lies and scandal, as Niebuhr justly termed them,—chose, among the stock themes for their common-places, the character and exploits of Alexander. They had their followers in every age; and, until a very recent period, all who wished to “point a moral or adorn a tale,” about unreasoning ambition, extravagant pride, and the formidable frenzies of free will when leagued with free power, have never failed to blazon forth the so-called madman of Macedonia as one of the most glaring examples. Without doubt, many of these writers adopted with implicit credence traditional ideas; and supposed, with uninquiring

philanthropy, that in blackening Alexander, they were doing humanity good service. But also, without doubt, many of his assailants, like those of other great men, have been mainly instigated by "that strongest of all antipathies, the antipathy of a second-rate mind to a first-rate one,"\* and by the envy which talent too often bears to genius.

Arrian, who wrote his history of Alexander, when Hadrian was emperor of the Roman world, and when the spirit of declamation and dogmatism was at its full height; but who was himself, unlike the dreaming pedants of the schools, a statesman and a soldier of practical and proved ability, well rebuked the malevolent aspersions which he heard continually thrown upon the memory of the great conqueror of the East. He truly says, "Let the man who speaks evil of Alexander, not merely bring forward those passages of Alexander's life which were really evil, but let him collect and review *all* the actions of Alexander, and then let him thoroughly consider first who and what manner of man he himself is, and what has been his own career; and then let him consider who and what manner of man Alexander was, and to what an eminence of human grandeur *he* arrived. Let him consider that Alexander was a king, and the undisputed lord of the two continents; and

\* De Staël.

that his name is renowned throughout the whole earth. Let the evil-speaker against Alexander bear all this in mind, and then let him reflect on his own insignificance, the pettiness of his own circumstances and affairs, and the blunders that he makes about these, paltry and trifling as they are. Let him then ask himself whether he is a fit person to censure and revile such a man as Alexander. I believe that there was in his time no nation of men, no city, nay, no single individual with whom Alexander's name had not become a familiar word. I therefore hold that such a man, who was like no ordinary mortal, was not born into the world without some special providence.”\*

And one of the most distinguished soldiers and writers of our own nation, Sir Walter Raleigh, though he failed to estimate justly the full merits of Alexander, has expressed his sense of the grandeur of the part played in the world by “The Great Emathian Conqueror” in language that well deserves quotation :—

“So much hath the spirit of some one man excelled as it hath undertaken and effected the alteration of the greatest states and commonweals, the erection of monarchies, the conquest of kingdoms and empires, guided handfuls of men against

\* Arrian. lib. vii. ad finem.

multitudes of equal bodily strength, contrived victories beyond all hope and discourse of reason, converted the fearful passions of his own followers into magnanimity, and the valour of his enemies into cowardice; such spirits have been stirred up in sundry ages of the world, and in divers parts thereof, to erect and cast down again, to establish and to destroy, and to bring all things, persons, and states to the same certain ends, which the infinite spirit of the *Universal*, piercing, moving, and governing all things, hath ordained. Certainly, the things that this king did, were marvellous, and would hardly have been undertaken by any one else: and though his father had determined to have invaded the Lesser Asia, it is like enough that he would have contented himself with some part thereof, and not have discovered the river of Indus, as this man did."\*

A higher authority than either Arrian or Raleigh may now be referred to by those who wish to know the real merit of Alexander as a general, and how far the common-place assertions are true, that his successes were the mere results of fortunate rashness and unreasoning pugnacity. Napoleon selected Alexander as one of the seven greatest generals whose noble deeds history has

\* "The Historie of the World," by Sir Walter Raleigh, Knight, p. 648.

handed down to us, and from the study of whose campaigns the principles of war are to be learned. The critique of the greatest conqueror of modern times on the military career of the great conqueror of the old world, is no less graphic than true.

“Alexander crossed the Dardanelles 334, B.C., with an army of about forty thousand men, of which one-eighth was cavalry; he forced the passage of the Granicus in opposition to an army under Memnon, the Greek, who commanded for Darius on the coast of Asia, and he spent the whole of the year 333 in establishing his power in Asia Minor. He was seconded by the Greek colonies, who dwelt on the borders of the Black Sea and on the Mediterranean, and in Sardis, Ephesus, Tarsus, Miletus, &c. The kings of Persia left their provinces and towns to be governed according to their own particular laws. Their empire was a union of confederated states, and did not form one nation; this facilitated its conquest. As Alexander only wished for the throne of the monarch, he easily effected the change, by respecting the customs, manners, and laws of the people, who experienced no change in their condition.

“In the year 332, he met with Darius at the head of sixty thousand men, who had taken up a position near Tarsus, on the banks of the Issus, in the province of Cilicia. He defeated him,



entered Syria, took Damascus, which contained all the riches of the Great King, and laid siege to Tyre. This superb metropolis of the commerce of the world detained him nine months. He took Gaza after a siege of two months; crossed the Desert in seven days; entered Pelusium and Memphis, and founded Alexandria. In less than two years, after two battles and four or five sieges, the coasts of the Black Sea, from Phasis to Byzantium, those of the Mediterranean, as far as Alexandria, all Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt, had submitted to his arms.

“In 331, he repassed the Desert, encamped in Tyre, recrossed Syria, entered Damascus, passed the Euphrates and Tigris, and defeated Darius on the field of Arbela, when he was at the head of a still stronger army than that which he commanded on the Issus, and Babylon opened her gates to him. In 330, he overran Susa, and took that city, Persepolis, and Pasargada, which contained the tomb of Cyrus. In 329, he directed his course northward, entered Ecbatana, and extended his conquests to the coasts of the Caspian, punished Bessus, the cowardly assassin of Darius, penetrated into Scythia, and subdued the Scythians. In 328, he forced the passage of the Oxus, received sixteen thousand recruits from Macedonia, and reduced the neighbouring people

to subjection. In 327, he crossed the Indus, vanquished Porus in a pitched battle, took him prisoner, and treated him as a king. He contemplated passing the Ganges, but his army refused. He sailed down the Indus, in the year 326, with eight hundred vessels; having arrived at the ocean, he sent Nearchus with a fleet to run along the coasts of the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf, as far as the mouth of the Euphrates. In 325, he took sixty days in crossing from Gedrosia, entered Keramania, returned to Pasarga, Persepolis, and Susa, and married Statira, the daughter of Darius. In 324, he marched once more to the north, passed Ecbatana, and terminated his career at Babylon."\*

The enduring importance of Alexander's conquests is to be estimated not by the duration of his own life and empire, or even by the duration of the kingdoms which his generals after his death formed out of the fragments of that mighty dominion. In every region of the world that he traversed, Alexander planted Greek settlements, and founded cities, in the populations of which the Greek element at once asserted its predominance. Among his successors, the Seleucidæ and the Ptolemies imitated their great captain in blending schemes of civilization, of com-

\* See Count Montholon's "Memoirs of Napoleon."

influence of ancient Greece, poured on the Eastern world by Alexander's victories, and then brought back to bear on Mediæval Europe by the spread of the Saracenic powers, has exerted its action on the elements of modern civilization by this powerful though indirect channel, as well as by the more obvious effects of the remnants of classic civilization which survived in Italy, Gaul, Britain, and Spain, after the irruption of the Germanic nations.\*

These considerations invest the Macedonian triumphs in the East with never-dying interest, such as the most showy and sanguinary successes of mere "low ambition and the pride of kings," however they may dazzle for a moment, can never retain with posterity. Whether the old Persian empire which Cyrus founded could have survived much longer than it did, even if Darius had been victorious at Arbela, may safely be disputed. That ancient dominion, like the Turkish at the present time, laboured under every cause of decay and dissolution. The satraps, like the modern pachas, continually rebelled against the central power, and Egypt in particular, was almost always in a state of insurrection against its nominal sovereign. There was no longer any effective central control, or any internal principle of unity

\* See Humboldt's "Cosmos."

fused through the huge mass of the empire, and binding it together. Persia was evidently about to fall, but, had it not been for Alexander's invasion of Asia, she would most probably have fallen beneath some other oriental power, as Media and Babylon had formerly fallen before herself, and as, in after times, the Parthian supremacy gave way to the revived ascendancy of Persia in the East, under the sceptres of the Arsacidæ. A revolution that merely substituted one Eastern power for another, would have been utterly barren and unprofitable to mankind.

Alexander's victory at Arbela not only overthrew an Oriental dynasty, but established European rulers in its stead. It broke the monotony of the Eastern world by the impression of Western energy and superior civilization; even as England's present mission is to break up the mental and moral stagnation of India and Cathay, by pouring upon and through them the impulsive current of Anglo-Saxon commerce and conquest.

Arbela, the city which has furnished its name to the decisive battle which gave Asia to Alexander, lies more than twenty miles from the actual scene of conflict. The little village, then named Gaugamela, is close to the spot where the armies met, but has ceded the honour of naming the battle to its more euphonious neighbour. Gaugamela is

situate in one of the wide plains that lie between the Tigris and the mountains of Kurdistan. A few undulating hillocks diversify the surface of this sandy track; but the ground is generally level, and admirably qualified for the evolutions of cavalry, and also calculated to give the larger of two armies the full advantage of numerical superiority. The Persian king (who before he came to the throne had proved his personal valour as a soldier, and his skill as a general) had wisely selected this region for the third and decisive encounter between his forces and the invader. The previous defeats of his troops, however severe they had been, were not looked on as irreparable. The Granicus had been fought by his generals rashly and without mutual concert. And, though Darius himself had commanded and been beaten at Issus, that defeat might be attributed to the disadvantageous nature of the ground; where, cooped up between the mountains, the river, and the sea, the numbers of the Persians confused and clogged alike the general's skill and the soldiers' prowess, and their very strength had been made their weakness. Here, on the broad plains of Kurdistan, there was scope for Asia's largest host to array its lines, to wheel, to skirmish, to condense or expand its squadrons, to manœuvre, and to charge at will. Should Alexander and his

scanty band dare to plunge into that living sea of war, their destruction seemed inevitable.

Darius felt, however, the critical nature to himself as well as to his adversary of the coming encounter. He could not hope to retrieve the consequences of a third overthrow. The great cities of Mesopotamia and Upper Asia, the central provinces of the Persian empire, were certain to be at the mercy of the victor. Darius knew also the Asiatic character well enough to be aware how it yields to the *prestige* of success, and the apparent career of destiny. He felt that the diadem was now either to be firmly replaced on his own brow, or to be irrevocably transferred to the head of his European conqueror. He, therefore, during the long interval left him after the battle of Issus, while Alexander was subjugating Syria and Egypt, assiduously busied himself in selecting the best troops which his vast empire supplied, and in training his varied forces to act together with some uniformity of discipline and system.

The hardy mountaineers of Affghanistan, Bokhara, Khiva, and Thibet, were then, as at present, far different to the generality of Asiatics in war-like spirit and endurance. From these districts, Darius collected large bodies of admirable infantry; and the countries of the modern Kurds and Turkomans supplied, as they do now, squadrons of horse-

men, hardy, skilful, bold, and trained to a life of constant activity and warfare. It is not uninteresting to notice that the ancestors of our own late enemies the Sikhs, served as allies of Darius against the Macedonians. They are spoken of in Arrian as Indians who dwelt near Bactria. They were attached to the troops of that satrapy, and their cavalry was one of the most formidable forces in the whole Persian army.

Besides these picked troops contingents also came in from the numerous other provinces that yet obeyed the Great King. Altogether, the horse are said to have been forty thousand, the scythe-bearing chariots two hundred, and the armed elephants fifteen in number. The amount of the infantry is uncertain; but the knowledge which both ancient and modern times supply of the usual character of oriental armies, and of their populations of camp-followers, may warrant us in believing that many myriads were prepared to fight, or to encumber those who fought for the last Darius.

The position of the Persian king near Mesopotamia was chosen with great military skill. It was certain that Alexander on his return from Egypt must march northward along the Syrian coast, before he attacked the central provinces of the Persian empire. A direct eastward march from

the lower part of Palestine across the great Syrian Desert was then, as ever, utterly impracticable. Marching eastward from Syria, Alexander would, on crossing the Euphrates, arrive at the vast Mesopotamian plains. The wealthy capitals of the empire, Babylon, Susa, and Persepolis, would then lie to his south; and if he marched down through Mesopotamia to attack them, Darius might reasonably hope to follow the Macedonians with his immense force of cavalry, and without even risking a pitched battle to harass and finally overwhelm them. We may remember that three centuries afterwards a Roman army under Crassus was thus actually destroyed by the Oriental archers and horsemen in these very plains;\* and that the ancestors of the Parthians who thus vanquished the Roman legions, served by thousands under king Darius. If, on the contrary, Alexander should defer his march against Babylon, and first seek an encounter with the Persian army, the country on each side of the Tigris in this latitude was highly advantageous for such an army as Darius commanded, and he had close in his rear the mountainous districts of northern Media; where he himself had in early life been satrap, where he had acquired reputation as a soldier and a general, and where he justly

\* See Mitford.



expected to find loyalty to his person, and a safe refuge in case of defeat.\*

His great antagonist came on across the Euphrates against him, at the head of an army which Arrian, copying from the journals of Macedonian officers, states to have consisted of forty thousand foot, and seven thousand horse. In studying the campaigns of Alexander we possess the peculiar advantage of deriving our information from two of Alexander's generals of division, who bore an important part in all his enterprises. Aristobulus and Ptolemy (who afterwards became king of Egypt) kept regular journals of the military events which they witnessed, and these journals were in the possession of Arrian, when he drew up his history of Alexander's expedition. The high character of Arrian for integrity makes us confident that he used them fairly, and his comments on the occasional discrepancies between the two Macedonian narratives prove that he used them sensibly. He frequently quotes the very words of his authorities: and his history thus acquires a charm such as very few ancient or modern mili-

\* Mitford's remarks on the strategy of Darius in his last campaign are very just. After having been unduly admired as an historian, Mitford is now unduly neglected. His partiality, and his deficiency in scholarship have been exposed sufficiently to make him no longer a dangerous guide as to Greek politics; while the clearness and brilliancy of his nar-

tary narratives possess. The anecdotes and expressions which he records, we fairly believe to be genuine, and not to be the coinage of a rhetorician, like those in Curtius. In fact, in reading Arrian, we read General Aristobulus and General Ptolemy on the campaigns of the Macedonians; and it is like reading General Jomini or General Foy on the campaigns of the French.

The estimate which we find in Arrian of the strength of Alexander's army seems reasonable enough, when we take into account both the losses which he had sustained, and the reinforcements which he had received since he left Europe. Indeed, to Englishmen, who know with what mere handfuls of men our own generals have, at Plassy, at Assaye, at Meeanee, and other Indian battles, routed large hosts of Asiatics, the disparity of numbers, that we read of in the victories won by the Macedonians over the Persians, presents nothing incredible. The army which Alexander now led, was wholly composed of veteran troops in the highest possible state of equipment and discipline, enthusiastically devoted to their leader, and full of confidence in his military genius and his victorious destiny.

rative, and the strong common sense of his remarks (where his party prejudices do not interfere) must always make his volumes valuable as well as entertaining.

The celebrated Macedonian phalanx formed the main strength of his infantry. This force had been raised and organized by his father Philip, who on his accession to the Macedonian throne needed a numerous and quickly-formed army, and who by lengthening the spear of the ordinary Greek phalanx, and increasing the depth of the files, brought the tactic of armed masses to the highest extent of which it was capable with such materials as he possessed.\* He formed his men sixteen deep, and placed in their grasp the *sarissa*, as the Macedonian pike was called, which was four-and-twenty feet in length, and when couched for action, reached eighteen feet in front of the soldier: so that, as a space of about two feet was allowed between the ranks, the spears of the five files behind him projected in front of each front-rank man. The phalangite soldier was fully equipped in the defensive armour of the regular Greek infantry. And thus the phalanx presented a ponderous and bristling mass, which, as long as its order was kept compact, was sure to bear down all opposition. The defects of such an organization are obvious, and were proved in after years, when the Macedonians were opposed to the Roman legions. But it is clear, that under Alexander the phalanx was not the cumbrous

\* See Niebuhr's "Hist. of Rome," vol. iii. p. 466.

unwieldy body which it was at Cynoscephalæ and Pydna. His men were veterans; and he could obtain from them an accuracy of movement and steadiness of evolution, such as probably the recruits of his father would only have floundered in attempting, and such as certainly were impracticable in the phalanx when handled by his successors: especially as under them it ceased to be a standing force, and became only a militia.\* Under Alexander the phalanx consisted of an aggregate of eighteen thousand men, who were divided into six brigades of three thousand each. These were again subdivided into regiments and companies; and the men were carefully trained to wheel, to face about, to take more ground, or to close up, as the emergencies of the battle required. Alexander also arrayed troops armed in a different manner, in the intervals of the regiments of his phalangites, who could prevent their line from being pierced, and their companies taken in flank, when the nature of the ground prevented a close formation; and who could be withdrawn, when a favourable opportunity arrived for closing up the phalanx or any of its brigades for a charge, or when it was necessary to prepare to receive cavalry.

Besides the phalanx, Alexander had a consi-

\* See Niebuhr.

derable force of infantry who were called Shield-bearers: they were not so heavily armed as the phalangites, or as was the case with the Greek regular infantry in general, but they were equipped for close fight, as well as for skirmishing; and were far superior to the ordinary irregular troops of Greek warfare. They were about six thousand strong. Besides these he had several bodies of Greek regular infantry; and he had archers, slingers, and javelin-men, who fought also with broadsword and target, and who were principally supplied him by the highlanders of Illyria and Thracia. The main strength of his cavalry consisted in two chosen regiments of cuirassiers, one Macedonian, and one Thessalian, each of which was about fifteen hundred strong. They were provided with long lances and heavy swords, and horse as well as man was fully equipped with defensive armour. Other regiments of regular cavalry were less heavily armed, and there were several bodies of light horsemen, whom Alexander's conquests in Egypt and Syria had enabled him to mount superbly.

A little before the end of August, Alexander crossed the Euphrates at Thapsacus, a small corps of Persian cavalry under Mazæus retiring before him. Alexander was too prudent to march down through the Mesopotamian deserts, and con-

tinued to advance eastward with the intention of passing the Tigris, and then, if he was unable to find Darius and bring him to action, of marching southward on the left side of that river along the skirts of a mountainous district, where his men would suffer less from heat and thirst, and where provisions would be more abundant.

Darius, finding that his adversary was not to be enticed into the march through Mesopotamia against his capital, determined to remain on the battle-ground, which he had chosen on the left of the Tigris; where, if his enemy met a defeat or a check, the destruction of the invaders would be certain with two such rivers as the Euphrates and the Tigris in their rear. The Persian King availed himself to the utmost of every advantage in his power. He caused a large space of ground to be carefully levelled for the operation of his scythe-armed chariots; and he deposited his military stores in the strong town of Arbela, about twenty miles in his rear. The rhetoricians of after ages have loved to describe Darius Codomanus as a second Xerxes in ostentation and imbecility; but a fair examination of his generalship in this his last campaign, shows that he was worthy of bearing the same name as his great predecessor, the royal son of Hystaspes.

On learning that Darius was with a large army on the left of the Tigris, Alexander hurried forward and crossed that river without opposition. He was at first unable to procure any certain intelligence of the precise position of the enemy, and after giving his army a short interval of rest, he marched for four days down the left bank of the river. A moralist may pause upon the fact that Alexander must in this march have passed within a few miles of the ruins of Nineveh, the great city of the primæval conquerors of the human race. Neither the Macedonian king nor any of his followers knew what those vast mounds had once been. They had already sunk into utter destruction; and it is only within the last few years that the intellectual energy of one of our own countrymen has rescued Nineveh from its long centuries of oblivion.\*

On the fourth day of Alexander's southward march, his advanced guard reported that a body of the enemy's cavalry was in sight. He instantly formed his army in order for battle, and directing them to advance steadily, he rode forward at the head of some squadrons of cavalry, and charged the Persian horse, whom he found before him. This was a mere reconnoitring party, and they

\* See Layard's "Nineveh," and see Vaux's "Nineveh and Persepolis," p. 16.

broke and fled immediately, but the Macedonians made some prisoners, and from them Alexander found that Darius was posted only a few miles off, and learned the strength of the army that he had with him. On receiving this news Alexander halted, and gave his men repose for four days, so that they should go into action fresh and vigorous. He also fortified his camp and deposited in it all his military stores, and all his sick and disabled soldiers; intending to advance upon the enemy with the serviceable part of his army perfectly unencumbered. After this halt, he moved forward, while it was yet dark, with the intention of reaching the enemy, and attacking them at break of day. About half way between the camps there were some undulations of the ground, which concealed the two armies from each other's view. But, on Alexander arriving at their summit, he saw, by the early light, the Persian host arrayed before him; and he probably also observed traces of some engineering operation having been carried on along part of the ground in front of them. Not knowing that these marks had been caused by the Persians having levelled the ground for the free use of their war-chariots, Alexander suspected that hidden pitfalls had been prepared with a view of disordering the approach of his cavalry. He summoned a council of war forthwith. Some of the officers



were for attacking instantly, at all hazards, but the more prudent opinion of Parmenio prevailed, and it was determined not to advance farther till the battle-ground had been carefully surveyed.

Alexander halted his army on the heights; and taking with him some light-armed infantry and some cavalry, he passed part of the day in reconnoitring the enemy, and observing the nature of the ground which he had to fight on. Darius wisely refrained from moving from his position to attack the Macedonians on the eminences, which they occupied, and the two armies remained until night without molesting each other. On Alexander's return to his head-quarters, he summoned his generals and superior officers together, and telling them that he well knew that *their* zeal wanted no exhortation, he besought them to do their utmost in encouraging and instructing those whom each commanded, to do their best in the next day's battle. They were to remind them that they were now not going to fight for a province as they had hitherto fought, but they were about to decide by their swords the dominion of all Asia. Each officer ought to impress this upon his subalterns, and they should urge it on their men. Their natural courage required no long words to excite its ardour: but they should be reminded of the paramount importance of steady-

ness in action. The silence in the ranks must be unbroken as long as silence was proper; but when the time came for the charge, the shout and the cheer must be full of terror for the foe. The officers were to be alert in receiving and communicating orders; and every one was to act as if he felt that the whole result of the battle depended on his own single good conduct.

Having thus briefly instructed his generals, Alexander ordered that the army should sup, and take their rest for the night.

Darkness had closed over the tents of the Macedonians, when Alexander's veteran general, Parmenio, came to him, and proposed that they should make a night attack on the Persians. The king is said to have answered, that he scorned to filch a victory, and that Alexander must conquer openly and fairly. Arrian justly remarks that Alexander's resolution was as wise as it was spirited. Besides the confusion and uncertainty which are inseparable from night engagements, the value of Alexander's victory would have been impaired, if gained under circumstances which might supply the enemy with any excuse for his defeat, and encourage him to renew the contest. It was necessary for Alexander not only to beat Darius, but to gain such a victory, as should leave his rival without apology, and without hope of recovery.

The Persians, in fact, expected, and were prepared to meet a night attack. Such was the apprehension that Darius entertained of it, that he formed his troops at evening in order of battle, and kept them under arms all night. The effect of this was that the morning found them jaded and dispirited, while it brought their adversaries all fresh and vigorous against them.

The written order of battle which Darius himself caused to be drawn up, fell into the hands of the Macedonians after the engagement, and Aristobulus copied it into his journal. We thus possess, through Arrian, unusually authentic information as to the composition and arrangement of the Persian army. On the extreme left were the Bactrian, Daan, and Arachosian cavalry. Next to these Darius placed the troops from Persia proper, both horse and foot. Then came the Susians, and next to these the Cadusians. These forces made up the left wing. Darius's own station was in the centre. This was composed of the Indians, the Carians, the Mardian archers, and the division of Persians who were distinguished by the golden apples that formed the knobs of their spears. Here also were stationed the body-guard of the Persian nobility. Besides these, there were, in the centre, formed in deep order, the Uxian and Babylonian troops, and

the soldiers from the Red Sea. The brigade of Greek mercenaries, whom Darius had in his service, and who alone were considered fit to stand the charge of the Macedonian phalanx, was drawn up on either side of the royal chariot. The right wing was composed of the Cœlosyrians, and Mesopotamians, the Medes, the Parthians, the Sacians, the Tapurians, Hyrcanians, Albanians, and Sacasinæ. In advance of the line on the left wing were placed the Scythian cavalry, with a thousand of the Bactrian horse, and a hundred scythe-armed chariots. The elephants and fifty scythe-armed chariots were ranged in front of the centre; and fifty more chariots, with the Armenian and Cappadocian cavalry, were drawn up in advance of the right wing.

Thus arrayed, the great host of King Darius passed the night, that to many thousands of them was the last of their existence. The morning of the first of October,\* two thousand one hundred and eighty-two years ago, dawned slowly to their wearied watching, and they could hear the note of the Macedonian trumpet sounding to arms, and could see King Alexander's forces descend from

\* See Clinton's "Fasti Hellenici." The battle was fought eleven days after an eclipse of the moon, which gives the means of fixing the precise date.

their tents on the heights, and form in order of battle on the plain.

There was deep need of skill, as well as of valour on Alexander's side ; and few battle-fields have witnessed more consummate generalship than was now displayed by the Macedonian King. There were no natural barriers by which he could protect his flanks ; and not only was he certain to be overlapped on either wing by the vast lines of the Persian army, but there was imminent risk of their circling round him and charging him in the rear, while he advanced against their centre. He formed, therefore, a second or reserve line, which was to wheel round, if required, or to detach troops to either flank, as the enemy's movements might necessitate ; and thus, with their whole army ready at any moment to be thrown into one vast hollow square, the Macedonians advanced in two lines against the enemy, Alexander himself leading on the right wing, and the renowned phalanx forming the centre, while Parmenio commanded on the left.

Such was the general nature of the disposition which Alexander made of his army. But we have in Arrian the details of the position of each brigade and regiment ; and as we know that these details were taken from the journals of Macedonian generals, it is interesting to examine them, and

to read the names and stations of King Alexander's generals and colonels in this, the greatest of his battles.

The eight regiments of the royal horseguards formed the right of Alexander's line. Their colonels were Cleitus (whose regiment was on the extreme right, the post of peculiar danger), Glaucias, Ariston, Sopolis, Heracleides, Demetrias, Meleager, and Hegelochus. Philotas was general of the whole division. Then came the Shieldbearing infantry: Nicanor was their general. Then came the phalanx in six brigades. Cœnus's brigade was on the right, and nearest to the Shieldbearers; next to this stood the brigade of Perdiccas, then Meleager's, then Polysperchon's; and then the brigade of Amynias, but which was now commanded by Simmias, as Amynias had been sent to Macedonia to levy recruits. Then came the infantry of the left wing, under the command of Craterus. Next to Craterus's infantry were placed the cavalry regiments of the allies with Eriguius for their general. The Thessalian cavalry, commanded by Philippos were next, and held the extreme left of the whole army. The whole left wing was entrusted to the command of Parmenio, who had round his person the Pharsalian regiment of cavalry, which was the strongest and best of all the Thessalian horse regiments.

The centre of the second line was occupied by a body of phalangite infantry, formed of companies, which were drafted for this purpose from each of the brigades of their phalanx. The officers in command of this corps, were ordered to be ready to face about, if the enemy should succeed in gaining the rear of the army. On the right of this reserve of infantry, in the second line, and behind the royal horseguards, Alexander placed half the Agrian light-armed infantry under Attalus, and with them Brison's body of Macedonian archers, and Cleander's regiment of foot. He also placed in this part of his army Menidas's squadron of cavalry, and Aretes's and Ariston's light horse. Menidas was ordered to watch if the enemy's cavalry tried to turn their flank, and, if they did so, to charge them before they wheeled completely round, and so take them in flank themselves. A similar force was arranged on the left of the second line for the same purpose. The Thracian infantry of Sitalces were placed there, and Cœranus's regiment of the cavalry of the Greek allies, and Agathon's troops of the Odrysian irregular horse. The extreme left of the second line in this quarter was held by Andromachus's cavalry. A division of Thracian infantry was left in guard of the camp. In advance of the right wing and centre was scattered a number of light-armed troops, of

javelin-men and bow-men, with the intention of warding off the charge of the armed chariots.\*

Conspicuous by the brilliancy of his armour, and by the chosen band of officers who were round his person, Alexander took his own station, as his custom was, in the right wing, at the head of his cavalry: and when all the arrangements for the battle were complete, and his generals were fully instructed how to act in each probable emergency, he began to lead his men towards the enemy.

It was ever his custom to expose his life freely in battle, and to emulate the personal prowess of his great ancestor, Achilles. Perhaps in the bold enterprise of conquering Persia, it was politic for Alexander to raise his army's daring to the utmost by the example of his own heroic valour: and, in his subsequent campaigns, the love of the excitement, of "the raptures of the strife," may have made him, like Murat, continue from choice, a custom which he commenced from duty. But he never suffered the ardour of the soldier to make him lose the coolness of the general, and at Arbela in particular

\* Kleber's arrangement of his troops at the battle of Heliopolis, where, with ten thousand Europeans he had to encounter eighty thousand Asiatics in an open plain, is worth comparing with Alexander's tactics at Arbela. See Thiers's "Histoire du Consulat," &c., vol. ii. livre v.



he showed that he could act up to his favourite Homeric maxim of being

*Ἀμφοτέρων, βασιλεὺς τ' ἀγαθὸς κρατερὸς τ' αἰχμητής.*

Great reliance had been placed by the Persian king on the effects of the scythe-bearing chariots. It was designed to launch these against the Macedonian phalanx, and to follow them up by a heavy charge of cavalry, which, it was hoped, would find the ranks of the spearmen disordered by the rush of the chariots, and easily destroy this most formidable part of Alexander's force. In front therefore, of the Persian centre, where Darius took his station, and which it was supposed that the phalanx would attack, the ground had been carefully levelled and smoothed, so as to allow the chariots to charge over it with their full sweep and speed. As the Macedonian army approached the Persian, Alexander found that the front of his whole line barely equalled the front of the Persian centre, so that he was out-flanked on his right by the entire left wing of the enemy, and by their entire right wing on his left. His tactics were to assail some one point of the hostile army, and gain a decisive advantage; while he refused, as far as possible, the encounter along the rest of the line. He, therefore, inclined his order of march to the right, so as to enable his right wing and centre to come into collision with the enemy on as favourable terms as possible,

although the manœuvre might in some respect compromise his left.

The effect of this oblique movement was to bring the phalanx and his own wing nearly beyond the limits of the ground, which the Persians had prepared for the operations of the chariots; and Darius, fearing to lose the benefit of this arm against the most important parts of the Macedonian force, ordered the Scythian and Bactrian cavalry, who were drawn up in advance on his extreme left, to charge round upon Alexander's right wing, and check its further lateral progress. Against these assailants Alexander sent from his second line Menidas's cavalry. As these proved too few to make head against the enemy, he ordered Ariston also from the second line with his light horse, and Cleander, with his foot, in support of Menidas. The Bactrians and Scythians now began to give way, but Darius reinforced them by the mass of Bactrian cavalry from his main line, and an obstinate cavalry fight now took place. The Bactrians and Scythians were numerous, and were better armed than the horsemen under Menidas and Ariston; and the loss at first was heaviest on the Macedonian side. But still the European cavalry stood the charge of the Asiatics, and at last, by their superior discipline, and by acting in squadrons that supported each

other, instead of fighting in a confused mass like the barbarians,\* the Macedonians broke their adversaries, and drove them off the field.

Darius now directed the scythe-armed chariots to be driven against Alexander's horseguards and the phalanx; and these formidable vehicles were accordingly sent rattling across the plain, against the Macedonian line. When we remember the alarm which the war-chariots of the Britons created among Cæsar's legions, we shall not be prone to deride this arm of ancient warfare as always

\* Ἄλλὰ καὶ ὥς τὰς προσβολὰς αὐτῶν ἐδέχοντο οἱ Μακεδόνες, καὶ βίᾳ κατ' ἑλίας προσπίπτοντες ἐξώθουν ἐκ τῆς τάξεως.—  
ARRIAN. lib. iii. c. 13.

The best explanation of this may be found in Napoleon's account of the cavalry fights between the French and the Mamelukes. "Two Mamelukes were able to make head against three Frenchmen, because they were better armed, better mounted, and better trained; they had two pair of pistols, a blunderbuss, a carabine, a helmet with a vizor, and a coat of mail; they had several horses, and several attendants on foot. One hundred cuirassiers, however, were not afraid of one hundred Mamelukes; three hundred could beat an equal number, and one thousand could easily put to the rout fifteen hundred, so great is the influence of tactics, order, and evolutions! Leclerc and Lasalle presented their men to the Mamelukes in several lines. When the Arabs were on the point of overwhelming the first, the second came to its assistance on the right and left; the Mamelukes then halted and wheeled, in order to turn the wings of this new line; this moment was always seized upon to charge them, and they were uniformly broken."—MONTGOMERY's "History of Captivity of Napoleon," vol. iv. p. 70.

useless. The object of the chariots was to create unsteadiness in the ranks against which they were driven, and squadrons of cavalry followed close upon them to profit by such disorder. But the Asiatic chariots were rendered ineffective at Arbela by the light-armed troops, whom Alexander had specially appointed for the service, and who, wounding the horses and drivers with their missile weapons, and running alongside so as to cut the traces or seize the reins, marred the intended charge; and the few chariots that reached the phalanx, passed harmlessly through the intervals which the spearmen opened for them, and were easily captured in the rear.

A mass of the Asiatic cavalry was now, for the second time, collected against Alexander's extreme right, and moved round it, with the view of gaining the flank of his army. At the critical moment, when their own flanks were exposed by this evolution, Aretes dashed on the Persian squadrons with his horsemen from Alexander's second line. While Alexander thus met and baffled all the flanking attacks of the enemy, with troops brought up from his second line, he kept his own horseguards and the rest of the front line of his wing fresh, and ready to take advantage of the first opportunity for striking a decisive blow. This soon came. A large body of horse, who were posted on the Per-

sian left wing nearest to the centre, quitted their station, and rode off to help their comrades in the cavalry fight, that still was going on at the extreme right of Alexander's wing against the detachments from his second line. This made a huge gap in the Persian array, and into this space Alexander instantly charged with his guard and all the cavalry of his wing; and then pressing towards his left, he soon began to make havoc in the left flank of the Persian centre. The Shieldbearing infantry now charged also among the reeling masses of the Asiatics; and five of the brigades of the phalanx, with the irresistible might of their sarissas, bore down the Greek mercenaries of Darius, and dug their way through the Persian centre. In the early part of the battle, Darius had showed skill and energy; and he now for some time encouraged his men, by voice and example, to keep firm. But the lances of Alexander's cavalry, and the pikes of the phalanx now pressed nearer and nearer to him. His charioteer was struck down by a javelin at his side; and at last Darius's nerve failed him, and, descending from his chariot, he mounted on a fleet horse and galloped from the plain, regardless of the state of the battle in other parts of the field, where matters were going on much more favourably for his cause, and where his presence might have done much towards gaining a victory.

Alexander's operations with his right and centre had exposed his left to an immensely preponderating force of the enemy. Parmenio kept out of action as long as possible; but Mazæus, who commanded the Persian right wing, advanced against him, completely out-flanked him, and pressed him severely with reiterated charges by superior numbers. Seeing the distress of Parmenio's wing, Simmias, who commanded the sixth brigade of the phalanx, which was next to the left wing, did not advance with the other brigades in the great charge upon the Persian centre, but kept back to cover Parmenio's troops on *their* right flank; as otherwise they would have been completely surrounded and cut off from the rest of the Macedonian army. By so doing, Simmias had unavoidably opened a gap in the Macedonian left centre; and a large column of Indian and Persian horse, from the Persian right centre, had galloped forward through this interval, and right through the troops of the Macedonian second line. Instead of then wheeling round upon Parmenio, or upon the rear of Alexander's conquering wing, the Indian and Persian cavalry rode straight on to the Macedonian camp, overpowered the Thracians who were left in charge of it, and began to plunder. This was stopped by the phalangite troops of the second line, who, after the enemy's horsemen had

rushed by them, faced about, countermarched upon the camp, killed many of the Indians and Persians in the act of plundering, and forced the rest to ride off again. Just at this crisis, Alexander had been recalled from his pursuit of Darius, by tidings of the distress of Parmenio, and of his inability to bear up any longer against the hot attacks of Mazæus. Taking his horseguards with him, Alexander rode towards the part of the field where his left wing was fighting; but on his way thither he encountered the Persian and Indian cavalry, on their return from his camp.

These men now saw that their only chance of safety was to cut their way through; and in one huge column they charged desperately upon the Macedonian regiments. There was here a close hand-to-hand fight, which lasted some time, and sixty of the royal horseguards fell, and three generals, who fought close to Alexander's side, were wounded. At length the Macedonian discipline and valour again prevailed, and a large number of the Persian and Indian horsemen were cut down, some few only succeeding in breaking through and riding away. Relieved of these obstinate enemies, Alexander again formed his regiments of horseguards, and led them towards Parmenio; but by this time that general also was victorious. Probably the news of Darius's fight

had reached Mazæus, and had damped the ardour of the Persian right wing, while the tidings of their comrades' success must have proportionally encouraged the Macedonian forces under Parmenio. His Thessalian cavalry particularly distinguished themselves by their gallantry and persevering good conduct; and by the time that Alexander had ridden up to Parmenio the whole Persian army was in full flight from the field.

It was of the deepest importance to Alexander to secure the person of Darius, and he now urged on the pursuit. The river Lycus was between the field of battle and the city of Arbela, whither the fugitives directed their course, and the passage of this river was even more destructive to the Persians than the swords and spears of the Macedonians had been in the engagement.\* The narrow bridge was soon choked up by the flying thousands who rushed towards it, and vast numbers of the Persians threw themselves, or were hurried by others, into the rapid stream, and perished in its waters. Darius had crossed it, and had ridden on through Arbela without halting. Alexander reached that city on the next day, and

\* I purposely omit any statement of the loss in the battle. There is a palpable error of the transcribers in the numbers which we find in our present manuscripts of Arrian, and Curtius is of no authority.



made himself master of all Darius's treasure and stores; but the Persian king, unfortunately for himself, had fled too fast for his conqueror: but had only escaped to perish by the treachery of his Bactrian satrap, Bessus.

A few days after the battle Alexander entered Babylon, "the oldest seat of earthly empire" then in existence, as its acknowledged lord and master. There were yet some campaigns of his brief and bright career to be accomplished. Central Asia was yet to witness the march of his phalanx. He was yet to effect that conquest of Affghanistan in which England since has failed. His generalship, as well as his valour, were yet to be signalized on the banks of the Hydaspes, and the field of Chillianwallah; and he was yet to precede the Queen of England in annexing the Punjaub to the dominions of an European sovereign. But the crisis of his career was reached; the great object of his mission was accomplished; and the ancient Persian empire, which once menaced all the nations of the earth with subjection, was irreparably crushed, when Alexander had won his crowning victory at Arbela.

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SYNOPSIS OF EVENTS BETWEEN THE BATTLE OF  
ARBELA AND THE BATTLE OF THE METAURUS.

B.C. 330. The Lacedæmonians endeavour to create a rising in Greece against the Macedonian power; they are defeated by Antipater, Alexander's viceroy; and their king, Agis, falls in the battle.

330 to 327. Alexander's campaigns in Upper Asia.

327, 326. Alexander marches through Affghanistan to the Punjaub. He defeats Porus. His troops refuse to march towards the Ganges, and he commences the descent of the Indus. On his march he attacks and subdues several Indian tribes, among others, the Malli; in the storming of whose capital (Mooltan), he is severely wounded. He directs his admiral Nearchus to sail round from the Indus to the Persian Gulf: and leads the army back across Scinde and Beloochistan.

324. Alexander returns to Babylon. "In the tenth year after he had crossed the Hellespont, Alexander, having won his vast dominion, entered Babylon; and resting from his career in that oldest seat of earthly empire, he steadily surveyed the mass of various nations which owned his sovereignty, and revolved in his mind the great

work of breathing into this huge but inert body the living spirit of Greek civilization. In the bloom of youthful manhood, at the age of thirty-two, he paused from the fiery speed of his earlier course ; and for the first time gave the nations an opportunity of offering their homage before his throne. They came from all the extremities of the earth, to propitiate his anger, to celebrate his greatness, or to solicit his protection. \* \* \* History may allow us to think that Alexander and a Roman ambassador did meet at Babylon, that the greatest man of the ancient world, saw and spoke with a citizen of that great nation, which was destined to succeed him in his appointed work, and to found a wider and still more enduring empire. They met, too, in Babylon, almost beneath the shadow of the temple of Bel, perhaps the earliest monument ever raised by human pride and power, in a city, stricken, as it were, by the word of God's heaviest judgment, as the symbol of greatness apart from and opposed to goodness" (ARNOLD).

323. Alexander dies at Babylon. On his death being known at Greece, the Athenians, and others of the southern states, take up arms to shake off the domination of Macedon. They are at first successful ; but the return of some of Alexander's veterans from Asia enables Antipater to prevail over them.

317 to 289. Agathocles is tyrant of Syracuse; and carries on repeated wars with the Carthaginians; in the course of which (311) he invades Africa, and reduces the Carthaginians to great distress.

306. After a long series of wars with each other and after all the heirs of Alexander had been murdered, his principal surviving generals assume the title of king, each over the provinces which he has occupied. The four chief among them were Antigonus, Ptolemy, Lysimachus, and Seleucus. Antipater was now dead, but his son Cassander succeeded to his power in Macedonia and Greece.

301. Seleucus and Lysimachus defeat Antigonus at Ipsus. Antigonus is killed in the battle.

280. Seleucus, the last of Alexander's captains, is assassinated. Of all of Alexander's successors Seleucus had formed the most powerful empire. He had acquired all the provinces between Phrygia and the Indus. He extended his dominion in India beyond the limits reached by Alexander. Seleucus had some sparks of his great master's genius in promoting civilization and commerce, as well as in gaining victories. Under his successors, the Seleucidæ, this vast empire rapidly diminished: Bactria became independent, and a separate dynasty of Greek kings ruled there in the

year 125, when it was overthrown by the Scythian tribe. Parthia threw off its allegiance to the Seleucidæ in 250 B.C., and the powerful Parthian kingdom, which afterwards proved so formidable a foe to Rome, absorbed nearly all the provinces west of the Euphrates, that had obeyed the first Seleucus. Before the battle of Ipsus, Mithridates, a Persian prince of the blood-royal of the Achæmenidæ, had escaped to Pontus, and founded there the kingdom of that name.

Besides the kingdom of Seleucus, which, when limited to Syria, Palestine, and parts of Asia Minor, long survived, the most important kingdom formed by a general of Alexander, was that of the Ptolemies in Egypt. The throne of Macedonia was long and obstinately contended for by Cassander, Polysperchon, Lysimachus, Pyrrhus, Antigonus, and others; but at last was secured by the dynasty of Antigonus Gonatas. The old republics of southern Greece suffered severely during these tumults, and the only Greek states that showed any strength and spirit, were the cities of the Achæan league, the Ætolians, and the islanders of Rhodes.

290. Rome had now thoroughly subdued the Samnites and the Etruscans, and had gained numerous victories over the Cisalpine Gauls. Wishing to confirm her dominion in Lower Italy,

she became entangled in a war with Pyrrhus, fourth king of Epirus, who was called over by the Tarentines to aid them. Pyrrhus was at first victorious, but in the year 275 was defeated by the Roman legions in a pitched battle. He returned to Greece, remarking of Sicily, *Οἶαν ἀπολείπομεν Καρχηδονίοις καὶ Ῥωμαίοις παλαιστραν*. Rome becomes mistress of all Italy from the Rubicon to the Straits of Messina.

264. The first Punic war begins. Its primary cause was the desire of both the Romans and the Carthaginians to possess themselves of Sicily. The Romans form a fleet, and successfully compete with the marine of Carthage.\* During the latter half of the war the military genius of Hamilcar Barca sustains the Carthaginian cause in Sicily. At the end of twenty-four years the Carthaginians sue for peace, though their aggregate loss in ships and men had been less than that sustained by the Romans since the beginning of the war. Sicily becomes a Roman province.

\* There is at this present moment in the Great Exhibition at Hyde Park a model of a piratical galley of Labuan, part of the mast of which can be let down on an enemy, and form a bridge for boarders. It is worth while to compare this with the account in Polybius of the boarding bridges which the Roman admiral, Duillius, affixed to the masts of his galleys, and by means of which he won his great victory over the Carthaginian fleet.

240 to 218. The Carthaginian mercenaries who had been brought back from Sicily to Africa, mutiny against Carthage, and nearly succeed in destroying her. After a sanguinary and desperate struggle, Hamilcar Barca crushes them. During this season of weakness to Carthage, Rome takes from her the island of Sardinia. Hamilcar Barca forms the project of obtaining compensation by conquests in Spain, and thus enabling Carthage to renew the struggle with Rome. He takes Hannibal (then a child) to Spain with him. He and, after his death, his brother win great part of southern Spain to the Carthaginian interest. Hannibal obtains the command of the Carthaginian armies in Spain 221 B.C., being then twenty-six years old. He attacks Saguntum, a city on the Ebro, in alliance with Rome, which is the immediate pretext for the second Punic war.

During this interval Rome had to sustain a storm from the north. The Cisalpine Gauls in 226, formed an alliance with one of the fiercest tribes of their brethren north of the Alps, and began a furious war against the Romans, which lasted six years. The Romans gave them several severe defeats, and took from them part of their territories near the Po. It was on this occasion that the Roman colonies of Cremona and

Placentia were founded, the latter of which did such essential service to Rome in the second Punic war by the resistance which it made to the army of Hasdrubal. A muster-roll was made in this war of the effective military force of the Romans themselves, and of those Italian states that were subject to them. The return showed a force of seven hundred thousand foot, and seventy thousand horse. Polybius, who mentions this muster, remarks 'Εφ' οὗς Ἀννίβας ἐλάττους ἔχων δισ μυρίων, ἐπέβαλεν εἰς τὴν Ἰταλίαν.

218. Hannibal crosses the Alps and invades Italy.



## CHAPTER IV.

## THE BATTLE OF THE METAURUS, B.C. 207.

Quid debeas, O Roma, Neronibus,  
 Testis Metaurum flumen, et Hasdrubal  
 Devictus, et pulcher fugatis  
 Ille dies Latio tenebris, &c.

HORATIUS, iv. Od. 4.

The consul Nero, who made the unequalled march, which deceived Hannibal, and defeated Hasdrubal, thereby accomplishing an achievement almost unrivalled in military annals. The first intelligence of his return, to Hannibal, was the sight of Hasdrubal's head thrown into his camp. When Hannibal saw this, he exclaimed with a sigh, that "Rome would now be the mistress of the world." To this victory of Nero's it might be owing that his imperial namesake reigned at all. But the infamy of the one has eclipsed the glory of the other. When the name of Nero is heard, who thinks of the consul? But such are human things.—BYRON.

ABOUT midway between Rimini and Ancona a little river falls into the Adriatic, after traversing one of those districts of Italy, in which a vain attempt has lately been made to revive, after long centuries of servitude and shame, the spirit of Italian nationality, and the energy of free institutions

That stream is still called the Metauro; and wakens by its name recollections of the resolute daring of ancient Rome; and of the slaughter that stained its current two thousand and sixty-three years ago, when the combined consular armies of Livius and Nero encountered and crushed near its banks the varied host, which Hannibal's brother was leading from the Pyrenees, the Rhone, the Alps, and the Po, to aid the great Carthaginian in his stern struggle to annihilate the growing might of the Roman Republic, and make the Punic power supreme over all the nations of the world.

The Roman historian, who termed that struggle the most memorable of all wars that ever were carried on,\* wrote in no spirit of exaggeration. For it is not in ancient, but in modern history, that parallels for its incidents and its heroes are to be found. The similitude between the contest which Rome maintained against Hannibal, and that which England was for many years engaged in against Napoleon, has not passed unobserved by recent historians. "Twice," says Arnold,† "has there been witnessed the struggle of the highest individual genius against the resources and institutions of a great nation; and in both cases the

\* Livy, lib. xxi. sec. 1.

† Vol. iii. p. 62. See also Alison, *passim*.

nation has been victorious. For seventeen years Hannibal strove against Rome; for sixteen years Napoleon Bonaparte strove against England: the efforts of the first ended in Zama,—those of the second in Waterloo." One point, however, of the similitude between the two wars has scarcely been adequately dwelt on. That is, the remarkable parallel between the Roman general who finally defeated the great Carthaginian, and the English general, who gave the last deadly overthrow to the French emperor. Scipio and Wellington both held for many years commands of high importance, but distant from the main theatres of warfare. The same country was the scene of the principal military career of each. It was in Spain that Scipio, like Wellington, successively encountered and overthrew nearly all the subordinate generals of the enemy, before being opposed to the chief champion and conqueror himself. Both Scipio and Wellington restored their countrymen's confidence in arms, when shaken by a series of reverses. And each of them closed a long and perilous war by a complete and overwhelming defeat of the chosen leader and the chosen veterans of the foe.

Nor is the parallel between them limited to their military characters and exploits. Scipio, like Wellington, became an important leader of the aristocratic party among his countrymen, and

was exposed to the unmeasured invectives of the violent section of his political antagonists. When, early in the last reign, an infuriated mob assaulted the Duke of Wellington in the streets of the English capital on the anniversary of Waterloo, England was even more disgraced by that outrage, than Rome was by the factious accusations which demagogues brought against Scipio, but which he proudly repelled on the day of trial, by reminding the assembled people that it was the anniversary of the battle of Zama. Happily, a wiser and a better spirit has now for years pervaded all classes of our community; and we shall be spared the ignominy of having worked out to the end the parallel of national ingratitude. Scipio died a voluntary exile from the malevolent turbulence of Rome. Englishmen of all ranks and politics have now long united in affectionate admiration of our modern Scipio: and even those who have most widely differed from the Duke on legislative or administrative questions, forget what they deem the political errors of that time-honoured head, while they gratefully call to mind the laurels that have wreathed it.

Scipio at Zama trampled in the dust the power of Carthage; but that power had been already irreparably shattered in another field, where neither Scipio nor Hannibal commanded. When the

Metaurus witnessed the defeat and death of Hasdrubal, it witnessed the ruin of the scheme by which alone Carthage could hope to organize decisive success,—the scheme of enveloping Rome at once from the north and the south of Italy by two chosen armies, led by two sons of Hamilcar.\* That battle was the determining crisis of the contest, not merely between Rome and Carthage, but between the two great families of the world, which then made Italy the arena of their oft-renewed contest for pre-eminence.

The French historian, Michelet, whose "*Histoire Romaine*" would have been invaluable, if the general industry and accuracy of the writer had in any degree equalled his originality and brilliancy, eloquently remarks, "It is not without reason that so universal and vivid a remembrance of the Punic wars has dwelt in the memories of men. They formed no mere struggle to determine the lot of two cities or two empires; but it was a strife, on the event of which depended the fate of two races of mankind, whether the dominion of the world should belong to the Indo-Germanic or to the Semitic family of nations. Bear in mind, that the first of these comprises, besides the Indians and the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, and the Germans. In the other are ranked the Jews

\* See Arnold, vol. iii. 387.

and the Arabs, the Phœnicians and the Carthaginians. On the one side is the genius of heroism, of art, and legislation: on the other, is the spirit of industry, of commerce, of navigation. The two opposite races have everywhere come into contact, everywhere into hostility. In the primitive history of Persia and Chaldea, the heroes are perpetually engaged in combat with their industrious and perfidious neighbours. The struggle is renewed between the Phœnicians and the Greeks on every coast of the Mediterranean. The Greek supplants the Phœnician in all his factories, all his colonies in the east: soon will the Roman come, and do likewise in the west. Alexander did far more against Tyre than Salmanasar or Nabuchodonosor had done. Not content with crushing her, he took care that she never should revive: for he founded Alexandria as her substitute, and changed for ever the track of the commerce of the world. There remained Carthage — the great Carthage, and her mighty empire,—mighty in a far different degree than Phœnicia's had been. Rome annihilated it. Then occurred that which has no parallel in history,—an entire civilization perished at one blow—vanished, like a falling star. The "Periplus" of Hanno, a few coins, a score of lines in Plautus, and, lo, all that remains of the Carthaginian world!

“Many generations must needs pass away before the struggle between the two races could be renewed; and the Arabs, that formidable rear-guard of the Semitic world, dashed forth from their deserts. The conflict between the two races then became the conflict of two religions. Fortunate was it that those daring Saracenic cavaliers encountered in the East the impregnable walls of Constantinople, in the West the chivalrous valour of Charles Martel, and the sword of the Cid. The crusades were the natural reprisals for the Arab invasions, and form the last epoch of that great struggle between the two principal families of the human race.”

It is difficult, amid the glimmering light supplied by the allusions of the classical writers, to gain a full idea of the character and institutions of Rome's great rival. But we can perceive how inferior Carthage was to her competitor in military resources, and how far less fitted than Rome she was to become the founder of centralized and centralizing dominion, that should endure for centuries, and fuse into imperial unity the narrow nationalities of the ancient races, that dwelt around and near the shores of the Mediterranean sea.

Carthage was originally neither the most ancient nor the most powerful of the numerous colonies which the Phœnicians planted on the coast of

northern Africa. But her advantageous position, the excellence of her constitution (of which, though ill informed as to its details, we know that it commanded the admiration of Aristotle), and the commercial and political energy of her citizens gave her the ascendancy over Hippo, Utica, Leptis and her other sister Phœnician cities in those regions; and she finally reduced them to a condition of dependency, similar to that which the subject allies of Athens occupied relatively to that once imperial city. When Tyre and Sidon, and the other cities of Phœnicia itself sank from independent republics into mere vassal states of the great Asiatic monarchies, and obeyed by turns a Babylonian, a Persian, and a Macedonian master, their power and their traffic rapidly declined; and Carthage succeeded to the important maritime and commercial character which they had previously maintained. The Carthaginians did not seek to compete with the Greeks on the north-eastern shores of the Mediterranean, or in the three inland seas which are connected with it; but they maintained an active intercourse with the Phœnicians, and through them with lower and central Asia; and they, and they alone, after the decline and fall of Tyre, navigated the waters of the Atlantic. They had the monopoly of all the commerce of the world that was carried on beyond the Straits of



Gibraltar. We have yet extant (in a Greek translation) the narrative of the voyage of Hanno, one of their admirals, along the western coast of Africa as far as Sierra Leone. And in the Latin poem of Festus Avienus, frequent references are made to the records of the voyages of another celebrated Carthaginian admiral, Himilco, who had explored the north-western coast of Europe. Our own islands are mentioned by Himilco as the lands of the Hiberni and the Albioni. It is indeed certain that the Carthaginians frequented the Cornish coast (as the Phœnicians had done before them) for the purpose of procuring tin; and there is every reason to believe that they sailed as far as the coasts of the Baltic for amber. When it is remembered that the mariner's compass was unknown in those ages, the boldness and skill of the seamen of Carthage, and the enterprise of her merchants, may be paralleled with any achievements that the history of modern navigation and commerce can produce.

In their Atlantic voyages along the African shores, the Carthaginians followed the double object of traffic and colonization. The numerous settlements that were planted by them along the coast from Morocco to Senegal, provided for the needy members of the constantly increasing population of a great commercial capital; and also strengthened

the influence which Carthage exercised among the tribes of the African coast. Besides her fleets, her caravans gave her a large and lucrative trade with the native Africans; nor must we limit our belief of the extent of the Carthaginian trade with the tribes of central and western Africa, by the narrowness of the commercial intercourse, which civilized nations of modern times have been able to create in those regions.

Although essentially a mercantile and seafaring people, the Carthaginians by no means neglected agriculture. On the contrary, the whole of their territory was cultivated like a garden. The fertility of the soil repaid the skill and toil bestowed on it; and every invader, from Agathocles to Scipio Æmilianus, was struck with admiration at the rich pasture lands carefully irrigated, the abundant harvests, the luxuriant vineyards, the plantations of fig and olive trees, the thriving villages, the populous towns, and the splendid villas of the wealthy Carthaginians, through which his march lay, as long as he was on Carthaginian ground.

Although the Carthaginians abandoned the Ægean and the Pontus to the Greeks, they were by no means disposed to relinquish to those rivals the commerce and the dominion of the coasts of the Mediterranean westward of Italy. For cen-

turies the Carthaginians strove to make themselves masters of the islands that lie between Italy and Spain. They acquired the Balearic islands, where the principal harbour, Port Mahon, still bears the name of a Carthaginian admiral. They succeeded in reducing the great part of Sardinia; but Sicily could never be brought into their power. They repeatedly invaded that island, and nearly overran it; but the resistance which was opposed to them by the Syracusans under Gelon, Dionysius, Timoleon, and Agathocles, preserved the island from becoming Punic, though many of its cities remained under the Carthaginian rule, until Rome finally settled the question to whom Sicily was to belong, by conquering it for herself.

With so many elements of success, with almost unbounded wealth, with commercial and maritime activity, with a fertile territory, with a capital city of almost impregnable strength, with a constitution that ensured for centuries the blessings of social order, with an aristocracy singularly fertile in men of the highest genius, Carthage yet failed signally and calamitously in her contest for power with Rome. One of the immediate causes of this may seem to have been the want of firmness among her citizens, which made them terminate the first Punic war by begging peace, sooner than endure any longer the hardships and burdens

caused by a state of warfare, although their antagonists had suffered far more severely than themselves. Another cause was the spirit of faction among their leading men, which prevented Hannibal in the second war from being properly reinforced and supported. But there were also more general causes why Carthage proved inferior to Rome. These were her position relatively to the mass of the inhabitants of the country which she ruled, and her habit of trusting to mercenary armies in her wars.

Our clearest information as to the different races of men in and about Carthage, is derived from Diodorus Siculus.\* That historian enumerates four different races: first, he mentions the Phœnicians who dwelt in Carthage: next, he speaks of the Liby-Phœnicians; these, he tells us, dwelt in many of the maritime cities, and were connected by intermarriages with the Phœnicians, which was the cause of their compound name: thirdly, he mentions the Libyans, the bulk and the most ancient part of the population, hating the Carthaginians intensely on account of the oppressiveness of their domination: lastly, he names the Numidians, the nomade tribes of the frontier.

It is evident, from this description, that the native Libyans were a subject class, without fran-

\* Vol. ii. p. 447. Wesseling's ed.

chise or political rights ; and, accordingly, we find no instance specified in history of a Libyan holding political office or military command. The half-castes, the Liby-Phœnicians, seem to have been sometimes sent out as colonists;\* but it may be inferred, from what Diodorus says of their residence, that they had not the right of the citizenship of Carthage: and only a single solitary case occurs of one of this race being entrusted with authority, and that, too, not emanating from the home-government. This is the instance of the officer sent by Hannibal to Sicily, after the fall of Syracuse ; whom Polybius† calls Myttnus the Libyan, but whom, from the fuller account in Livy, we find to have been a Liby-Phœnician:‡ and it is expressly mentioned what indignation was felt by the Carthaginian commanders in the island that this half-caste should control their operations.

With respect to the composition of their armies, it is observable that, though thirsting for extended empire, and though some of her leading men became generals of the highest order, the Carthaginians, as a people, were anything but personally warlike. As long as they could hire mercenaries to fight for them, they had little appetite for the

\* See the "Periplus" of Hanno.

† Lib. ix. 22.

‡ Lib. xxv. 40.

irksome training, and the loss of valuable time, which military service would have entailed on themselves.

As Michelet remarks, "The life of an industrious merchant, of a Carthaginian, was too precious to be risked, as long as it was possible to substitute advantageously for it that of a barbarian from Spain or Gaul. Carthage knew, and could tell to a drachma, what the life of a man of each nation came to. A Greek was worth more than a Campanian, a Campanian worth more than a Gaul or a Spaniard. When once this tariff of blood was correctly made out, Carthage began a war as a mercantile speculation. She tried to make conquests in the hope of getting new mines to work, or to open fresh markets for her exports. In one venture she could afford to spend fifty thousand mercenaries, in another, rather more. If the returns were good, there was no regret felt for the capital that had been sunk in the investment; more money got more men, and all went on well."\*

Armies composed of foreign mercenaries have in all ages been as formidable to their employers as to the enemy against whom they were directed. We know of one occasion (between the first and second Punic wars), when Carthage was brought

\* "Histoire Romaine," vol. ii. p. 40.

to the very brink of destruction by a revolt of her foreign troops. Other mutinies of the same kind must from time to time have occurred. Probably one of these was the cause of the comparative weakness of Carthage at the time of the Athenian expedition against Syracuse; so different from the energy with which she attacked Gelon half a century earlier, and Dionysius half a century later. And even when we consider her armies with reference only to their efficiency in warfare, we perceive at once the inferiority of such bands of *condottieri*, brought together without any common bond of origin, tactics, or cause, to the legions of Rome, which at the time of the Punic wars were raised from the very flower of a hardy agricultural population, trained in the strictest discipline, habituated to victory, and animated by the most resolute patriotism. And this shows also the transcendency of the genius of Hannibal, which could form such discordant materials into a compact organized force, and inspire them with the spirit of patient discipline and loyalty to their chief; so that they were true to him, in his adverse as well as in his prosperous fortunes; and throughout the chequered series of his campaigns no panic rout ever disgraced a division under his command, no mutiny, or even attempt at mutiny, was ever known in his camp; and finally, after fifteen years

of Italian warfare, his men followed their old leader to Zama, "with no fear and little hope;"\* and there, on that disastrous field, stood firm around him, his Old Guard; till Scipio's Numidian allies came up on their flank; when at last, surrounded and overpowered, the veteran battalions sealed their devotion to their general by their blood!

"But if Hannibal's genius may be likened to the Homeric god, who, in his hatred to the Trojans, rises from the deep to rally the fainting Greeks, and to lead them against the enemy, so the calm courage with which Hector met his more than human adversary in his country's cause, is no unworthy image of the unyielding magnanimity displayed by the aristocracy of Rome. As Hannibal utterly eclipses Carthage, so, on the contrary, Fabius, Marcellus, Claudius Nero, even Scipio himself, are as nothing when compared to the spirit, and wisdom, and power of Rome. The senate, which voted its thanks to its political enemy, Varro, after his disastrous defeat, 'because he had not despaired of the commonwealth,' and which disdained either to solicit, or to reprove, or to threaten, or in any way to notice, the twelve

\* "We advanced to Waterloo as the Greeks did to Thermopylæ; all of us without fear, and most of us without hope."—*Speech of General Foy.*



colonies which had refused their accustomed supplies of men for the army, is far more to be honoured than the conqueror of Zama. This we should the more carefully bear in mind, because our tendency is to admire individual greatness far more than national; and, as no single Roman will bear comparison to Hannibal, we are apt to murmur at the event of the contest, and to think that the victory was awarded to the least worthy of the combatants. On the contrary, never was the wisdom of God's Providence more manifest than in the issue of the struggle between Rome and Carthage. It was clearly for the good of mankind that Hannibal should be conquered; his triumph would have stopped the progress of the world. For great men can only act permanently by forming great nations; and no one man, even though it were Hannibal himself, can in one generation effect such a work. But where the nation has been merely enkindled for a while by a great man's spirit, the light passes away with him who communicated it; and the nation, when he is gone, is like a dead body, to which magic power had for a moment given unnatural life: when the charm has ceased, the body is cold and stiff as before. He who grieves over the battle of Zama, should carry on his thoughts to a period thirty years later, when Hannibal must in the course of

nature, have been dead, and consider how the isolated Phœnician city of Carthage was fitted to receive and to consolidate the civilization of Greece, or by its laws and institutions to bind together barbarians of every race and language into an organized empire, and prepare them for becoming, when that empire was dissolved, the free members of the commonwealth of Christian Europe." \*

It was in the spring of 207 B.C., that Hasdrubal, after skilfully disentangling himself from the Roman forces in Spain, and, after a march conducted with great judgment and little loss, through the interior of Gaul and the passes of the Alps, appeared in the country that now is the north of Lombardy, at the head of troops which he had partly brought out of Spain, and partly levied among the Gauls and Ligurians on his way. At this time Hannibal, with his unconquered and seemingly unconquerable army, had been eight years in Italy, executing with strenuous ferocity the vow of hatred to Rome, which had been sworn by him while yet a child at the bidding of his father

\* Arnold, vol. iii. p. 61. The above is one of the numerous bursts of eloquence that adorn Arnold's last volume, and cause such deep regret that that volume should have been the last, and its great and good author have been cut off with his work thus incomplete.

Hamilcar ; who, as he boasted, had trained up his three sons, Hannibal, Hasdrubal, and Mago, like three lion's whelps, to prey upon the Romans. But Hannibal's latter campaigns had not been signalized by any such great victories as marked the first years of his invasion of Italy. The stern spirit of Roman resolution, ever highest in disaster and danger, had neither bent nor despaired beneath the merciless blows which "the dire African" dealt her in rapid succession at Trebia, at Thrasy-mene, and at Cannæ. Her population was thinned by repeated slaughter in the field ; poverty and actual scarcity ground down the survivors, through the fearful ravages which Hannibal's cavalry spread through their corn-fields, their pasture-lands, and their vineyards ; many of her allies went over to the invader's side ; and new clouds of foreign war threatened her from Macedonia and Gaul. But Rome receded not. Rich and poor among her citizens vied with each other in devotion to their country. The wealthy placed their stores, and all placed their lives, at the state's disposal. And though Hannibal could not be driven out of Italy, though every year brought its sufferings and sacrifices, Rome felt that her constancy had not been exerted in vain. If she was weakened by the continued strife, so was Hannibal also ; and it was clear that the unaided resources of his army were unequal

to the task of her destruction. The single deer-hound could not pull down the quarry which he had so furiously assailed. Rome not only stood fiercely at bay, but had pressed back and gored her antagonist, that still, however, watched her in act to spring. She was weary, and bleeding at every pore; and there seemed to be little hope of her escape, if the other hound of old Hamilcar's race should come up in time to aid his brother in the death-grapple.

Hasdrubal had commanded the Carthaginian armies in Spain for some time with varying but generally unfavourable fortune. He had not the full authority over the Punic forces in that country, which his brother and his father had previously exercised. The faction at Carthage, which was at feud with his family, succeeded in fettering and interfering with his power; and other generals were from time to time sent into Spain, whose errors and misconduct caused the reverses that Hasdrubal met with. This is expressly attested by the Greek historian Polybius, who was the intimate friend of the younger Africanus, and drew his information respecting the second Punic war from the best possible authorities. Livy gives a long narrative of campaigns between the Roman commanders in Spain and Hasdrubal, which is so

palpably deformed by fictions and exaggerations as to be hardly deserving of attention.\*

It is clear that, in the year 208, B.C., at least, Hasdrubal out-manceuvred Publius Scipio, who held the command of the Roman forces in Spain, and whose object was to prevent him from passing the Pyrenees and marching upon Italy. Scipio expected that Hasdrubal would attempt the nearest route along the coast of the Mediterranean; and he therefore carefully fortified and guarded the passes of the eastern Pyrenees. But Hasdrubal passed these mountains near their western extremity; and then, with a considerable force of Spanish infantry, with a small number of African troops, with some elephants and much treasure, he marched, not directly towards the coast of the Mediterranean, but in a north-eastern line towards the centre of Gaul. He halted for the winter in the territory of the Arverni, the modern Auvergne, and conciliated or purchased the good will of the Gauls in that region, so far that he not only found friendly winter-quarters among them, but great numbers of them enlisted under him; and on the approach of spring, marched with him to invade Italy.

By thus entering Gaul at the south-west, and

\* See the excellent criticisms of Sir Walter Raleigh on this, in his "History of the World," book v. chap. iii. sec. 11.

avoiding its southern maritime districts, Hasdrubal kept the Romans in complete ignorance of his precise operations and movements in that country; all that they knew was that Hasdrubal had baffled Scipio's attempts to detain him in Spain; that he had crossed the Pyrenees with soldiers, elephants, and money, and that he was raising fresh forces among the Gauls. The spring was sure to bring him into Italy, and then would come the real tempest of the war, when from the north and from the south the two Carthaginian armies, each under a son of the Thunderbolt,\* were to gather together around the seven hills of Rome.

In this emergency the Romans looked among themselves earnestly and anxiously for leaders fit to meet the perils of the coming campaign.

The senate recommended the people to elect, as one of their consuls, Caius Claudius Nero, a patrician of one of the families of the great Claudian house. Nero had served during the preceding years of the war, both against Hannibal in Italy, and against Hasdrubal in Spain; but it is remarkable that the histories which we possess record no successes as having been achieved by him either before or after his great campaign of

\* Hamilcar was surnamed Barca, which means the Thunder-bolt. Sultan Bajazet had the similar surname of Yilderim.

the Metaurus. It proves much for the sagacity of the leading men of the senate that they recognised in Nero the energy and spirit which were required at this crisis, and it is equally creditable to the patriotism of the people, that they followed the advice of the senate by electing a general who had no showy exploits to recommend him to their choice.

It was a matter of greater difficulty to find a second consul; the laws required that one consul should be a plebeian; and the plebeian nobility had been fearfully thinned by the events of the war. While the senators anxiously deliberated among themselves what fit colleague for Nero could be nominated at the coming comitia, and sorrowfully recalled the names of Marcellus, Gracchus, and other plebeian generals who were no more—one taciturn and moody old man sat in sullen apathy among the conscript fathers. This was Marcus Livius, who had been consul in the year before the beginning of this war, and had then gained a victory over the Illyrians. After his consulship he had been impeached before the people on a charge of peculation and unfair division of the spoils among his soldiers;—the verdict was unjustly given against him, and the sense of this wrong, and of the indignity thus put upon him, had rankled unceasingly in the bosom of Livius,

so that for eight years after his trial he had lived in seclusion in his country seat, taking no part in any affairs of state. Latterly the Censors had compelled him to come to Rome and resume his place in the senate, where he used to sit gloomily apart, giving only a silent vote. At last an unjust accusation, against one of his near kinsmen, made him break silence, and he harangued the house in words of weight and sense, which drew attention to him; and taught the senators that a strong spirit dwelt beneath that unimposing exterior. Now, while they were debating on what Noble of a plebeian house was fit to assume the perilous honours of the consulate, some of the elder of them looked on Marcus Livius, and remembered that in the very last triumph which had been celebrated in the streets of Rome, this grim old man had sat in the car of victory; and that he had offered the last thanksgiving sacrifice for the success of the Roman arms, which had bled before Capitoline Jove. There had been no triumphs since Hannibal came into Italy. The Illyrian campaign of Livius was the last that had been so honoured; perhaps it might be destined for him now to renew the long-interrupted series. The senators resolved that Livius should be put in nomination as consul with Nero; the people were willing to elect him: the only opposition came



from himself. He taunted them with their inconsistency in honouring the man whom they had convicted of a base crime. "If I am innocent," said he, "why did you place such a stain on me? If I am guilty, why am I more fit for a second consulship than I was for my first one?" The other senators remonstrated with him, urging the example of the great Camillus, who, after an unjust condemnation on a similar charge, both served and saved his country. At last Livius ceased to object; and Caius Claudius Nero and Marcus Livius were chosen consuls of Rome.

A quarrel had long existed between the two consuls, and the senators strove to effect a reconciliation between them before the campaign. Here again Livius for a long time obstinately resisted the wish of his fellow-senators. He said it was best for the state that he and Nero should continue to hate one another. Each would do his duty better when he knew that he was watched by an enemy in the person of his own colleague. At last the entreaties of the senate prevailed, and Livius consented to forego the feud, and to co-operate with Nero in preparing for the coming struggle.

As soon as the winter snows were thawed, Hasdrubal commenced his march from Auvergne to the Alps. He experienced none of the difficulties which his brother had met with from the moun-

tain tribes. Hannibal's army had been the first body of regular troops that had ever traversed their regions; and, as wild animals assail a traveller, the natives rose against it instinctively, in imagined defence of their own habitations, which they supposed to be the objects of Carthaginian ambition. But the fame of the war, with which Italy had now been convulsed for twelve years, had penetrated into the Alpine passes; and the mountaineers now understood that a mighty city southward of the Alps, was to be attacked by the troops whom they saw marching among them. They now not only opposed no resistance to the passage of Hasdrubal, but many of them, out of the love of enterprise and plunder, or allured by the high pay that he offered, took service with him; and thus he advanced upon Italy with an army that gathered strength at every league. It is said, also, that some of the most important engineering works which Hannibal had constructed were found by Hasdrubal still in existence, and materially favoured the speed of his advance. He thus emerged into Italy from the Alpine valleys much sooner than had been anticipated. Many warriors of the Ligurian tribes joined him: and, crossing the river Po, he marched down its southern bank to the city of Placentia, which he wished to secure as a base for his future operations. Pla-

centia resisted him as bravely as it had resisted Hannibal twelve years before ; and for some time Hasdrubal was occupied with a fruitless siege before its walls.

Six armies were levied for the defence of Italy when the long-dreaded approach of Hasdrubal was announced. Seventy thousand Romans served in the fifteen legions, of which, with an equal number of Italian allies, those armies and the garrisons were composed. Upwards of thirty thousand more Romans were serving in Sicily, Sardinia, and Spain. The whole number of Roman citizens of an age fit for military duty, scarcely exceeded a hundred and thirty thousand. The census taken before the commencement of the war had shown a total of two hundred and seventy thousand, which had been diminished by more than half during twelve years. These numbers are fearfully emphatic of the extremity to which Rome was reduced, and of her gigantic efforts in that great agony of her fate. Not merely men, but money and military stores, were drained to the utmost ; and if the armies of that year should be swept off by a repetition of the slaughters of Thrasymene and Cannæ, all felt that Rome would cease to exist. Even if the campaign were to be marked by no decisive success on either side, her ruin seemed certain. In South Italy

Hannibal had either detached Rome's allies from her, or had impoverished them by the ravages of his army. If Hasdrubal could have done the same in Upper Italy; if Etruria, Umbria, and northern Latium, had either revolted or been laid waste, Rome must have sunk beneath sheer starvation; for the hostile or desolated territory would have yielded no supplies of corn for her population; and money, to purchase it from abroad, there was none. Instant victory was a matter of life or death. Three of her six armies were ordered to the north, but the first of these was required to overawe the disaffected Etruscans. The second army of the north was pushed forward, under Porcius, the prætor, to meet and keep in check the advanced troops of Hasdrubal; while the third, the grand army of the north, which was to be under the immediate command of the consul Livius, who had the chief command in all North Italy, advanced more slowly in its support. There were similarly three armies in the south, under the orders of the other consul, Claudius Nero.

The lot had decided, that Livius was to be opposed to Hasdrubal, and that Nero should face Hannibal. And "when all was ordered as themselves thought best, the two consuls went forth of the city; each his several way. The people

of Rome were now quite otherwise affected, than they had been, when L. Æmilius Paulus and C. Terentius Varro were sent against Hannibal. They did no longer take upon them to direct their generals, or bid them dispatch, and win the victory betimes ; but rather they stood in fear, lest all diligence, wisdom, and valour, should prove too little. For since few years had passed, wherein some one of their generals had not been slain ; and since it was manifest, that if either of these present consuls were defeated, or put to the worst, the two Carthaginians would forthwith joyn, and make short work with the other : it seemed a greater happiness than could be expected, that each of them should return home victor ; and come of with honour from such mighty opposition, as he was like to find. With extreme difficulty had Rome held up her head ever since the battle of Cannæ ; though it were so, that Hannibal alone, with little help from Carthage, had continued the war in Italy. But there was now arrived another son of Amilcar ; and one that, in his present expedition, had seemed a man of more sufficiency than Hannibal himself. For, whereas in that long and dangerous march thorow barbarous nations, over great rivers and mountains, that were thought unpassable, Hannibal had lost a great part of his army ; this Asdrubal, in

the same places, had multiplied his numbers; and gathering the people that he found in the way, descended from the Alps like a rowling snow-ball, far greater than he came over the Pyrenees at his first setting out of Spain. These considerations, and the like, of which fear presented many unto them, caused the people of Rome to wait upon their consuls out of the town, like a pensive train of mourners; thinking upon Marcellus and Crispinus, upon whom, in the like sort, they had given attendance the last year; but saw neither of them return alive from a less dangerous war. Particularly old Q. Fabius gave his accustomed advice to M. Livius, that he should abstain from giving or taking battel, until he well understood the enemies condition. But the consul made him a froward answer, and said, that he would fight the very first day, for that he thought it long till he should either recover his honour by victory, or by seeing the overthrow of his own unjust citizens, satisfie himself with the joy of a great, though not an honest revenge. But his meaning was better than his words." \*

Hannibal at this period occupied with his veteran but much-reduced forces the extreme south of Italy. It had not been expected either by friend or foe, that Hasdrubal would effect his

\* Sir Walter Raleigh.

passage of the Alps so early in the year as actually occurred. And even when Hannibal learned that his brother was in Italy, and had advanced as far as Placentia, he was obliged to pause for further intelligence, before he himself commenced active operations, as he could not tell whether his brother might not be invited into Etruria, to aid the party there that was disaffected to Rome, or whether he would march down by the Adriatic sea. Hannibal led his troops out of their winter quarters in Bruttium, and marched northward as far as Canusium. Nero had his head-quarters near Venusia, with an army which he had increased to forty thousand foot and two thousand five hundred horse, by incorporating under his own command some of the legions which had been intended to act under other generals in the south. There was another Roman army twenty thousand strong, south of Hannibal, at Tarentum. The strength of that city secured this Roman force from any attack by Hannibal, and it was a serious matter to march northward and leave it in his rear, free to act against all his dépôts and allies in the friendly part of Italy, which for the two or three last campaigns had served him for a base of his operations. Moreover, Nero's army was so strong that Hannibal could not concentrate troops enough to assume the offensive against it without

weakening his garrisons, and relinquishing, at least for a time, his grasp upon the southern provinces. To do this before he was certainly informed of his brother's operations, would have been an useless sacrifice; as Nero could retreat before him upon the other Roman armies near the capital, and Hannibal knew by experience that a mere advance of his army upon the walls of Rome, would have no effect on the fortunes of the war. In the hope, probably, of inducing Nero to follow him, and of gaining an opportunity of out-manceuvring the Roman consul and attacking him on his march, Hannibal moved into Lucania, and then back into Apulia;—he again marched down into Bruttium, and strengthened his army by a levy of recruits in that district. Nero followed him, but gave him no chance of assailing him at a disadvantage. Some partial encounters seem to have taken place; but the consul could not prevent Hannibal's junction with his Bruttian levies, nor could Hannibal gain an opportunity of surprising and crushing the consul.\* Hannibal returned to his former head-

\* The annalists whom Livy copied, spoke of Nero's gaining repeated victories over Hannibal, and killing and taking his men by tens of thousands. The falsehood of all this is self-evident. If Nero could thus always beat Hannibal, the Romans would not have been in such an agony of dread about Hasdrubal, as all writers describe. Indeed, we have the express testimony of Polybius that the statements which we



quarters at Canusium, and halted there in expectation of further tidings of his brother's movements. Nero also resumed his former position in observation of the Carthaginian army.

Meanwhile, Hasdrubal had raised the siege of Placentia, and was advancing towards Ariminum on the Adriatic, and driving before him the Roman army under Porcius. Nor when the consul Livius had come up, and united the second and third armies of the north, could he make head against the invaders. The Romans still fell back before Hasdrubal, beyond Ariminum, beyond the Metaurus, and as far as the little town of Sena, to the south-east of that river. Hasdrubal was not unmindful of the necessity of acting in concert with

read in Livy of Marcellus, Nero, and others gaining victories over Hannibal in Italy, must be all fabrications of Roman vanity. Polybius states, lib. xv. sec. 16, that Hannibal was never defeated before the battle of Zama; and in another passage, book ix. chap. 3, he mentions that after the defeats which Hannibal inflicted on the Romans in the early years of the war, they no longer dared face his army in a pitched battle on a fair field, and yet they resolutely maintained the war. He rightly explains this by referring to the superiority of Hannibal's cavalry, the arm which gained him all his victories. By keeping within fortified lines, or close to the sides of the mountains when Hannibal approached them, the Romans rendered his cavalry ineffective; and a glance at the geography of Italy will show how an army can traverse the greater part of that country without venturing far from the high grounds.

his brother. He sent messengers to Hannibal to announce his own line of march, and to propose that they should unite their armies in South Umbria, and then wheel round against Rome. Those messengers traversed the greater part of Italy in safety; but, when close to the object of their mission, were captured by a Roman detachment; and Hasdrubal's letter, detailing his whole plan of the campaign, was laid, not in his brother's hands, but in those of the commander of the Roman armies of the south. Nero saw at once the full importance of the crisis. The two sons of Hamilcar were now within two hundred miles of each other, and if Rome were to be saved the brothers must never meet alive. Nero instantly ordered seven thousand picked men, a thousand being cavalry, to hold themselves in readiness for a secret expedition against one of Hannibal's garrisons; and as soon as night had set in, he hurried forward on his bold enterprise: but he quickly left the southern road towards Lucania, and wheeling round, pressed northward with the utmost rapidity, towards Picenum. He had, during the preceding afternoon, sent messengers to Rome, who were to lay Hasdrubal's letters before the senate. There was a law forbidding a consul to make war or march his army beyond the limits of the province assigned to him, but in such an emergency, Nero

did not wait for the permission of the senate to execute his project; but informed them that he was already on his march to join Livius against Hasdrubal. He advised them to send the two legions which formed the home garrison, on to Narnia, so as to defend that pass of the Flaminian road against Hasdrubal, in case he should march upon Rome before the consular armies could attack him. They were to supply the place of these two legions at Rome by a levy *en masse* in the city, and by ordering up the reserve legion from Capua. These were his communications to the senate. He also sent horsemen forward along his line of march, with orders to the local authorities to bring stores of provisions and refreshment of every kind to the road side, and to have relays of carriages ready for the conveyance of the wearied soldiers. Such were the precautions which he took for accelerating his march; and when he had advanced some little distance from his camp, he briefly informed his soldiers of the real object of their expedition. He told them that never was there a design more seemingly audacious, and more really safe. He said he was leading them to a certain victory, for his colleague had an army large enough to balance the enemy already, so that *their* swords would decisively turn the scale. The very rumour that a fresh consul

and a fresh army had come up, when heard on the battle-field (and he would take care that they should not be heard of before they were seen and felt) would settle the business. They would have all the credit of the victory, and of having dealt the final decisive blow. He appealed to the enthusiastic reception which they already met with on their line of march as a proof and an omen of their good fortune.\* And, indeed, their whole path was amidst the vows and prayers and praises of their countrymen. The entire population of the districts through which they passed, flocked to the road-side to see and bless the deliverers of their country. Food, drink, and refreshments of every kind were eagerly pressed on their acceptance. Each peasant thought a favour was conferred on him, if one of Nero's chosen band would accept aught at his hands. The soldiers caught the full spirit of their leader. Night and day they marched forwards, taking their hurried meals in the ranks, and resting by relays in the waggons, which the zeal of the country people provided, and which followed in the rear of the column.

Meanwhile, at Rome, the news of Nero's expedition had caused the greatest excitement and

\* Livy, lib. xxvii. c. 45.

alarm. All men felt the full audacity of the enterprise, but hesitated what epithet to apply to it. It was evident that Nero's conduct would be judged of by the event, that most unfair criterion, as the Roman historian truly terms it.\* People reasoned on the perilous state in which Nero had left the rest of his army, without a general, and deprived of the core of its strength, in the vicinity of the terrible Hannibal. They speculated on how long it would take Hannibal to pursue and overtake Nero himself, and his expeditionary force. They talked over the former disasters of the war, and the fall of both the consuls of the last year. All these calamities had come on them while they had only one Carthaginian general and army to deal with in Italy. Now they had two Punic wars at a time. They had two Carthaginian armies, they had almost two Hannibals in Italy. Hasdrubal was sprung from the same father; trained up in the same hostility to Rome; equally practised in battle against their legions; and, if the comparative speed and success with which he had crossed the Alps was a fair test, he was even a better general than his brother. With fear for their interpreter of every rumour, they exaggerated the strength of their

\* "Adparebat (quo nihil iniquius est) ex eventu famam habiturum."—LIVY, lib. xxvii. c. 44.

enemy's forces in every quarter, and criticised and distrusted their own.

Fortunately for Rome, while she was thus a prey to terror and anxiety, her consul's nerves were stout and strong, and he resolutely urged on his march towards Sena, where his colleague, Livius, and the prætor Porcius were encamped; Hasdrubal's army being in position about half a mile to their north. Nero had sent couriers forward to apprise his colleague of his project and of his approach; and by the advice of Livius, Nero so timed his final march, as to reach the camp at Sena by night. According to a previous arrangement, Nero's men were received silently into the tents of their comrades, each according to his rank. By these means, there was no enlargement of the camp that could betray to Hasdrubal the accession of force which the Romans had received. This was considerable; as Nero's numbers had been increased on the march by the volunteers, who offered themselves in crowds, and from whom he selected the most promising men, and especially the veterans of former campaigns. A council of war was held on the morning after his arrival, in which some advised that time should be given for Nero's men to refresh themselves, after the fatigue of such a march. But Nero vehemently opposed all delay. "The officer," said he, "who is for

giving time to my men here to rest themselves, is for giving time to Hannibal to attack my men, whom I have left in the camp in Apulia. He is for giving time to Hannibal and Hasdrubal to discover my march, and to manœuvre for a junction with each other in Cisalpine Gaul at their leisure. We must fight instantly, while both the foe here and the foe in the south are ignorant of our movements. We must destroy this Hasdrubal, and I must be back in Apulia before Hannibal awakes from his torpor.”\* Nero’s advice prevailed. It was resolved to fight directly, and before the consuls and prætor left the tent of Livius, the red ensign, which was the signal to prepare for immediate action, was hoisted, and the Romans forthwith drew up in battle array outside the camp.

Hasdrubal had been anxious to bring Livius and Porcius to battle, though he had not judged it expedient to attack them in their lines. And now, on hearing that the Romans offered battle, he also drew up his men, and advanced towards them. No spy or deserter had informed him of Nero’s arrival; nor had he received any direct information that he had more than his old enemies to deal with. But as he rode forward to reconnoitre the Roman line, he thought that their

\* Livy, lib. xxvii. c. 46.

numbers seemed to have increased, and that the armour of some of them was unusually dull and stained. He noticed also that the horses of some of the cavalry appeared to be rough and out of condition, as if they had just come from a succession of forced marches. So also, though, owing to the precaution of Livius, the Roman camp showed no change of size, it had not escaped the quick ear of the Carthaginian general, that the trumpet which gave the signal to the Roman legions, sounded that morning once oftener than usual, as if directing the troops of some additional superior officer. Hasdrubal, from his Spanish campaigns, was well acquainted with all the sounds and signals of Roman war; and from all that he heard and saw, he felt convinced that both the Roman consuls were before him. In doubt and difficulty as to what might have taken place between the armies of the south, and probably hoping that Hannibal also was approaching, Hasdrubal determined to avoid an encounter with the combined Roman forces, and to endeavour to retreat upon Insubrian Gaul, where he would be in a friendly country, and could endeavour to re-open his communications with his brother. He therefore led his troops back into their camp; and as the Romans did not venture on an assault upon his entrenchments, and Hasdrubal did not choose to



commence his retreat in their sight, the day passed away in inaction. At the first watch of the night, Hasdrubal led his men silently out of their camp, and moved northwards towards the Metaurus, in the hope of placing that river between himself and the Romans before his retreat was discovered. His guides betrayed him; and having purposely led him away from the part of the river that was fordable, they made their escape in the dark, and left Hasdrubal and his army wandering in confusion along the steep bank, and seeking in vain for a spot where the stream could be safely crossed. At last they halted; and when day dawned on them, Hasdrubal found that great numbers of his men, in their fatigue and impatience, had lost all discipline and subordination, and that many of his Gallic auxiliaries had got drunk, and were lying helpless in their quarters. The Roman cavalry was soon seen coming up in pursuit, followed at no great distance by the legions, which marched in readiness for an instant engagement. It was hopeless for Hasdrubal to think of continuing his retreat before them. The prospect of immediate battle might recall the disordered part of his troops to a sense of duty, and revive the instinct of discipline. He therefore ordered his men to prepare for action instantly, and made the best arrange-

ment of them that the nature of the ground would permit.

Heeren has well described the general appearance of a Carthaginian army. He says, "It was an assemblage of the most opposite races of the human species from the farthest parts of the globe. Hordes of half-naked Gauls were ranged next to companies of white-clothed Iberians, and savage Ligurians next to the far-travelled Nasamones and Lotophagi. Carthaginians and Phœnician Africans formed the centre; while innumerable troops of Numidian horsemen, taken from all the tribes of the Desert, swarmed about on unsaddled horses, and formed the wings: the van was composed of Balearic slingers; and a line of colossal elephants, with their Ethiopian guides, formed, as it were, a chain of moving fortresses before the whole army." Such were the usual materials and arrangements of the hosts that fought for Carthage; but the troops under Hasdrubal were not in all respects thus constituted or thus stationed. He seems to have been especially deficient in cavalry, and he had few African troops, though some Carthaginians of high rank were with him. His veteran Spanish infantry, armed with helmets and shields, and short cut-and-thrust swords, were the best part of his army. These, and his few Afri-

cans, he drew up on his right wing, under his own personal command. In the centre, he placed his Ligurian infantry, and on the left wing he placed or retained the Gauls, who were armed with long javelins and with huge broadswords and targets. The rugged nature of the ground in front and on the flank of this part of his line, made him hope that the Roman right wing would be unable to come to close quarters with these unserviceable barbarians, before he could make some impression with his Spanish veterans on the Roman left. This was the only chance that he had of victory or safety, and he seems to have done everything that good generalship could do to secure it. He placed his elephants in advance of his centre and right wing. He had caused the driver of each of them to be provided with a sharp iron spike and a mallet, and had given orders that every beast that became unmanageable, and ran back upon his own ranks, should be instantly killed, by driving the spike into the vertebra at the junction of the head and the spine. Hasdrubal's elephants were ten in number. We have no trustworthy information as to the amount of his infantry, but it is quite clear that he was greatly outnumbered by the combined Roman forces.

The tactic of the Roman legions had not yet acquired that perfection which it received from

the military genius of Marius,\* and which we read of in the first chapter of Gibbon. We possess, in that great work, an account of the Roman legions at the end of the commonwealth, and during the early ages of the empire, which those alone can adequately admire, who have attempted a similar description. We have also, in the sixth and seventeenth books of Polybius, an elaborate discussion on the military system of the Romans in his time, which was not far distant from the time of the battle of the Metaurus. But the subject is beset with difficulties ; and instead of entering into minute but inconclusive details, I would refer to Gibbon's first chapter, as serving for a general description of the Roman army in its period of perfection ; and remark, that the training and armour which the whole legion received in the time of Augustus, was, two centuries earlier, only partially introduced. Two divisions of troops, called *Hastati* and *Principes*, formed the bulk of each Roman legion in the second Punic war. Each of these divisions was twelve hundred strong. The *Hastatus* and the *Princeps* legionary bore a breast-plate or coat of mail, brazen greaves, and a brazen helmet, with a lofty upright crest of scarlet or

\* Most probably during the period of his prolonged consulship, from B.C. 104 to B.C. 101, while he was training his army against the Cimbri and the Teutons.

black feathers. He had a large oblong shield ; and, as weapons of offence, two javelins, one of which was light and slender, but the other was a strong and massive weapon, with a shaft about four feet long, and an iron head of equal length. The sword was carried on the right thigh, and was a short cut-and-thrust weapon, like that which was used by the Spaniards. Thus armed, the Hastati formed the front division of the legion, and the Principes the second. Each division was drawn up about ten deep ; a space of three feet being allowed between the files as well as the ranks, so as to give each legionary ample room for the use of his javelins, and of his sword and shield. The men in the second rank did not stand immediately behind those in the first rank, but the files were alternate, like the position of the men on a draught-board. This was termed the quincunx order. Niebuhr considers that this arrangement enabled the legion to keep up a shower of javelins on the enemy for some considerable time. He says, “ When the first line had hurled its pila, it probably stepped back between those who stood behind it, and two steps forward restored the front nearly to its first position ; a movement which, on account of the arrangement of the quincunx, could be executed without losing a moment. Thus one line succeeded the other in the front till

it was time to draw the swords; nay, when it was found expedient, the lines which had already been in the front, might repeat this change, since the stores of *pila* were surely not confined to the two, which each soldier took with him into battle.

The same change must have taken place in fighting with the sword, which, when the same tactic was adopted on both sides, was anything but a confused *mêlée*; on the contrary, it was a series of single combats." He adds, that a military man of experience had been consulted by him on the subject, and had given it as his opinion, "that the change of the lines as described above was by no means impracticable; but in the absence of the deafening noise of gunpowder, it cannot have had even any difficulty with well-trained troops."

The third division of the legion was six hundred strong, and acted as a reserve. It was always composed of veteran soldiers, who were called the *Triarii*. Their arms were the same as those of the *Principes* and *Hastati*; except that each *Triarian* carried a spear instead of javelins. The rest of the legion consisted of light-armed troops, who acted as skirmishers. The cavalry of each legion was at this period about three hundred strong. The Italian allies, who were attached to the legion, seem to have been similarly armed

and equipped, but their numerical proportion of cavalry was much larger.

Such was the nature of the forces that advanced on the Roman side to the battle of the Metaurus. Nero commanded the right wing, Livius the left, and the prætor Porcius had the command of the centre. "Both Romans and Carthaginians well understood how much depended upon the fortune of this day, and how little hope of safety there was for the vanquished. Only the Romans herein seemed to have had the better in conceit and opinion, that they were to fight with men desirous to have fled from them. And according to this presumption came Livius the consul, with a proud bravery to give charge on the Spaniards and Africans, by whom he was so sharply entertained, that the victory seemed very doubtful. The Africans and Spaniards were stout soldiers, and well acquainted with the manner of the Roman fight. The Ligurians, also, were a hardy nation, and not accustomed to give ground; which they needed the less, or were able now to do, being placed in the midst. Livius, therefore, and Porcius found great opposition; and with great slaughter on both sides prevailed little or nothing. Besides other difficulties, they were exceedingly troubled by the elephants, that brake their first ranks, and put them in such disorder, as the Roman ensigns were

driven to fall back ; all this while Claudius Nero, labouring in vain against a steep hill, was unable to come to blows with the Gauls that stood opposite him, but out of danger. This made Hasdrubal the more confident, who, seeing his own left wing safe, did the more boldly and fiercely make impression on the other side upon the left wing of the Romans. ”\*

But at last Nero, who found that Hasdrubal refused his left wing ; and who could not overcome the difficulties of the ground in the quarter assigned to him, decided the battle by another stroke of that military genius which had inspired his march. Wheeling a brigade of his best men round the rear of the rest of the Roman army, Nero fiercely charged the flank of the Spaniards and Africans. The charge was as successful as it was sudden. Rolled back in disorder upon each other, and overwhelmed by numbers, the Spaniards and Ligurians died, fighting gallantly to the last. The Gauls, who had taken little or no part in the strife of the day, were then surrounded, and butchered almost without resistance. Hasdrubal, after having, by the confession of his enemies, done all that a general could do, when he saw that the victory was irreparably lost, scorn-

\* “*Historie of the World,*” by Sir Walter Raleigh, p. 946.



ing to survive the gallant host which he had led, and to gratify, as a captive, Roman cruelty and pride, spurred his horse into the midst of a Roman cohort, and, sword in hand, met the death that was worthy of the son of Hamilcar, and the brother of Hannibal.

Success the most complete had crowned Nero's enterprise. Returning as rapidly as he had advanced, he was again facing the inactive enemies in the south before they even knew of his march. But he brought with him a ghastly trophy of what he had done. In the true spirit of that savage brutality which deformed the Roman national character, Nero ordered Hasdrubal's head to be flung into his brother's camp. Ten years had passed since Hannibal had last gazed on those features. The sons of Hamilcar had then planned their system of warfare against Rome, which they had so nearly brought to successful accomplishment. Year after year had Hannibal been struggling in Italy, in the hope of one day hailing the arrival of him whom he had left in Spain ; and of seeing his brother's eye flash with affection and pride at the junction of their irresistible hosts. He now saw that eye glazed in death, and in the agony of his heart the great Carthaginian groaned aloud that he recognised his country's destiny.

Meanwhile, at the tidings of the great battle, Rome at once rose from the thrill of anxiety and terror to the full confidence of triumph. Hannibal might retain his hold on Southern Italy for a few years longer, but the imperial city, and her allies, were no longer in danger from his arms; and, after Hannibal's downfall the Great Military Republic of the ancient world met in her career of conquest no other worthy competitor. Byron has termed Nero's march "unequalled," and, in the magnitude of its consequences, it is so. Viewed only as a military exploit, it remains unparalleled, save by Marlborough's bold march from Flanders to the Danube, in the campaign of Blenheim, and, perhaps, also, by the Archduke Charles's lateral march in 1796, by which he overwhelmed the French under Jourdain, and then, driving Moreau through the Black Forest and across the Rhine, for a while freed Germany from her invaders.

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SYNOPSIS OF EVENTS BETWEEN THE BATTLE OF  
THE METAURUS, B.C. 207, AND ARMINIUS'S  
VICTORY OVER THE ROMAN LEGIONS UNDER  
VARUS, A.D. 9.

B. C. 205 to 201. Scipio is made consul, and carries the war into Africa. He gains several victories there, and the Carthaginians recall Hannibal from Italy to oppose him. Battle of Zama in 201. Hannibal is defeated, and Carthage sues for peace. End of the second Punic war, leaving Rome confirmed in the dominion of Italy, Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica, and also mistress of great part of Spain, and virtually predominant in North Africa.

200. Rome makes war upon Philip, king of Macedonia. She pretends to take the Greek cities of the Achæan league and the Ætolians under her protection as allies. Philip is defeated by the proconsul Flamininus at Cynoscephalæ, 198; and begs for peace. The Macedonian influence is now completely destroyed in Greece, and the Roman established in its stead, though Rome pretends to acknowledge the independence of the Greek cities.

194. Rome makes war upon Antiochus, king of Syria.\* He is completely defeated at the

battle of Magnesia, 192, and is glad to accept peace on conditions which leave him dependent upon Rome.

200—190. "Thus, within the short space of ten years, was laid the foundation of the Roman authority in the east, and the general state of affairs entirely changed. If Rome was not yet the ruler, she was at least the arbitress of the world from the Atlantic to the Euphrates. The power of the three principal states was so completely humbled, that they durst not, without the permission of Rome, begin any new war; the fourth, Egypt, had already, in the year 201, placed herself under the guardianship of Rome; and the lesser powers followed of themselves: esteeming it an honour to be called the *allies of Rome*. With this name the nations were lulled into security, and brought under the Roman yoke; the new political system of Rome was founded and strengthened, partly by exciting and supporting the weaker states against the stronger, however unjust the cause of the former might be, and partly by factions which she found means to raise in every state, even the smallest." (HEEREN.)

172. War renewed between Macedon and Rome. Decisive defeat of Perses, the Macedonian king by Paulus Æmilius at Pydna, 168. Destruction of the Macedonian monarchy.

150. Rome oppresses the Carthaginians till they are driven to take up arms, and the third Punic war begins. Carthage is taken and destroyed by Scipio Æmilianus, 146, and the Carthaginian territory is made a Roman province.

146. In the same year in which Carthage falls, Corinth is stormed by the Roman army under Mummius. The Achæan league had been goaded into hostilities with Rome, by means similar to those employed against Carthage. The greater part of southern Greece, is made a Roman province under the name of Achaia.

133. Numantium is destroyed by Scipio Æmilianus. "The war against the Spaniards, who, of all the nations subdued by the Romans, defended their liberty with the greatest obstinacy, began in the year 200, six years after the total expulsion of the Carthaginians from their country, 206. It was exceedingly obstinate, partly from the natural state of the country, which was thickly populated, and where every place became a fortress; partly from the courage of the inhabitants; but above all, owing to the peculiar policy of the Romans, who were wont to employ their allies to subdue other nations. This war continued, almost without interruption from the year 200 to 133, and was, for the most part carried on at the same time in Hispania Citerior, where the Celtiberi were the most

formidable adversaries, and in Hispania Ulterior, where the Lusitani were equally powerful. Hostilities were at the highest pitch in 195, under Cato, who reduced Hispania Citerior to a state of tranquillity in 185—179, when the Celtiberi were attacked in their native territory; and 155—150, when the Romans in both provinces were so often beaten, that nothing was more dreaded by the soldiers at home than to be sent there. The extortions and perfidy of Servius Galba placed Viriathus, in the year 146, at the head of his nation, the Lusitani: the war, however, soon extended itself to Hispania Citerior, where many nations, particularly the Numantines, took up arms against Rome, 143. Viriathus, sometimes victorious and sometimes defeated, was never more formidable than in the moment of defeat; because he knew how to take advantage of his knowledge of the country, and of the dispositions of his countrymen. After his murder, caused by the treachery of Cæpio, 140, Lusitania was subdued; but the Numantine war became still more violent, and the Numantines compelled the consul Mancinus to a disadvantageous treaty, 137. When Scipio, in the year 133, put an end to this war, Spain was certainly tranquil; the northern parts, however, were still unsubdued, though the Romans penetrated as far as Galatia." (HEEREN.)

134. Commencement of the revolutionary century at Rome, *i.e.*, from the time of the excitement produced by the attempts made by the Gracchi to reform the commonwealth, to the battle of Actium (B.C. 31), which established Octavianus Cæsar as sole master of the Roman world. Throughout this period Rome was engaged in important foreign wars, most of which procured large accessions to her territory.

118—106. The Jugurthine war. Numidia is conquered, and made a Roman conquest.

113—101. The great and terrible war of the Cimbri and Teutones against Rome. These nations of northern warriors slaughter several Roman armies in Gaul, and in 102, attempt to penetrate into Italy. The military genius of Marius here saves his country; he defeats the Teutones near Aix, in Provence; and in the following year he destroys the army of the Cimbri, who had passed the Alps, near Vercellæ.

91—88. The war of the Italian allies against Rome. This was caused by the refusal of Rome to concede to them the rights of Roman citizenship. After a sanguinary struggle Rome gradually concedes it.

89—85. First war of the Romans against Mithridates the Great, king of Pontus, who had overrun Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece.

Sylla defeats his armies, and forces him to withdraw his forces from Europe. Sylla returns to Rome to carry on the civil war against the son and partisans of Marius. He makes himself Dictator.

74—64. The last Mithridatic wars. Lucullus, and after him Pompeius, command against the great king of Pontus, who at last is poisoned by his son, while designing to raise the warlike tribes of the Danube against Rome, and to invade Italy from the north-east. Great Asiatic conquests of the Romans. Besides the ancient province of Pergamus, the maritime countries of Bithynia, and nearly all Paphlagonia and Pontus, are formed into a Roman province, under the name of Bithynia; while on the southern coast Cilicia and Pamphylia form another under the name of Cilicia; Phœnicia and Syria compose a third, under the name of Syria. On the other hand, Great Armenia is left to Tigranes; Cappadocia to Ariobarzanes; the Bosphorus to Pharnaces; Judæa to Hyrcanus; and some other small states are also given to petty princes, all of whom remain dependent on Rome.

58—50. Cæsar conquers Gaul.

54. Crassus attacks the Parthians with a Roman army, but is overthrown and killed at Carrhæ in Mesopotamia. His lieutenant Cassius collects



the wrecks of the army, and prevents the Parthians from conquering Syria.

49—45. The civil war between Cæsar and the Pompeian party. Egypt, Mauritania, and Pontus are involved in the consequences of this war.

44. Cæsar is killed in the Capitol; the civil wars are soon renewed.

42. Death of Brutus and Cassius at Philippi.

31. Death of Antony and Cleopatra. Egypt becomes a Roman province, and Augustus Cæsar is left undisputed master of Rome, and all that is Rome's.

## CHAPTER V.

VICTORY OF ARMINIUS OVER THE ROMAN  
LEGIONS UNDER VARUS. A.D. 9.

*Hâc clade factum, ut Imperium quod in litore oceani non steterat, in ripâ Rheni fluminis staret.*—FLORUS.

To a truly illustrious Frenchman, whose reverses as a minister can never obscure his achievements in the world of letters, we are indebted for the most profound and most eloquent estimate that we possess of the importance of the Germanic element in European civilization, and of the extent to which the human race is indebted to those brave warriors who long were the unconquered antagonists, and finally became the conquerors, of Imperial Rome.

Twenty-three eventful years have passed away since M. Guizot delivered from the chair of modern history at Paris his course of lectures on the history of Civilization in Europe. During those years the spirit of earnest inquiry into the germs and

primary developments of existing institutions has become more and more active and universal; and the merited celebrity of M. Guizot's work has proportionally increased. Its admirable analysis of the complex political and social organizations of which the modern civilized world is made up, must have led thousands to trace with keener interest the great crises of times past, by which the characteristics of the present were determined. The narrative of one of these great crises, of the epoch A.D. 9, when Germany took up arms for her independence against Roman invasion, has for us this special attraction—that it forms part of our own national history. Had Arminius been supine or unsuccessful, our Germanic ancestors would have been enslaved or exterminated in their original seats along the Eyder and the Elbe. This island would never have borne the name of England, and “we, this great English nation, whose race and language are now overrunning the earth, from one end of it to the other,”\* would have been utterly cut off from existence.

Arnold may, indeed, go too far in holding that we are wholly unconnected in race with the Romans and Britons who inhabited this country before the coming-over of the Saxons; that, “nationally speaking, the history of Cæsar's invasion has no

\* Arnold's “Lectures on Modern History.”

more to do with us than the natural history of the animals which then inhabited our forests." There seems ample evidence to prove that the Romanized Celts whom our Teutonic forefathers found here, influenced materially the character of our nation. But the mainstream of our people was and is Germanic. Our language alone decisively proves this. Arminius is far more truly one of our national heroes than Caractacus: and it was our own primeval fatherland that the brave German rescued when he slaughtered the Roman legions eighteen centuries ago, in the marshy glens between the Lippe and the Ems.\*

Dark and disheartening, even to heroic spirits, must have seemed the prospects of Germany when Arminius planned the general rising of his countrymen against Rome. Half the land was occupied by Roman garrisons; and, what was worse, many of the Germans seemed patiently acquiescent in their state of bondage. The braver portion, whose patriotism could be relied on, was ill-armed and undisciplined; while the enemy's troops consisted of veterans in the highest state of equipment and training, familiarized with victory, and commanded by officers of proved skill and valour. The resources of Rome seemed boundless; her tenacity

\* See *post*, remarks on the relationship between the Cherusci and the English.

of purpose was believed to be invincible. There was no hope of foreign sympathy or aid ; for " the self-governing powers that had filled the old world had bent one after another before the rising power of Rome, and had vanished. The earth seemed left void of independent nations."\*

The German chieftain knew well the gigantic power of the oppressor. Arminius was no rude savage, fighting out of mere animal instinct, or in ignorance of the might of his adversary. He was familiar with the Roman language and civilization ; he had served in the Roman armies ; he had been admitted to the Roman citizenship, and raised to the rank of the equestrian order. It was part of the subtle policy of Rome to confer rank and privileges on the youth of the leading families in the nations which she wished to enslave. Among other young German chieftains, Arminius and his brother, who were the heads of the noblest house in the tribe of the Cherusci, had been selected as fit objects for the exercise of this insidious system. Roman refinements and dignities succeeded in denationalizing the brother, who assumed the Roman name of Flavius, and adhered to Rome throughout all her wars against his country. Arminius remained unbought by honours or wealth, uncorrupted by refinement or luxury. He aspired

\* Ranke.

to and obtained from Roman enmity a higher title than ever could have been given him by Roman favour. It is in the page of Rome's greatest historian, that his name has come down to us with the proud addition of "Liberator haud dubiè Germaniæ."\*

Often must the young chieftain, while meditating the exploit which has thus immortalized him, have anxiously revolved in his mind the fate of the many great men who had been crushed in the attempt which he was about to renew,—the attempt to stay the chariot-wheels of triumphant Rome. Could he hope to succeed where Hannibal and Mithridates had perished? What had been the doom of Viriathus? and what warning against vain valour was written on the desolate site where Numantia once had flourished? Nor was a caution wanting in scenes nearer home and more recent times. The Gauls had fruitlessly struggled for eight years against Cæsar; and the gallant Vercingetorix, who in the last year of the war had roused all his countrymen to insurrection, who had cut off Roman detachments, and brought Cæsar himself to the extreme of peril at Alesia—he, too, had finally succumbed, had been led captive in Cæsar's triumph, and had then been butchered in cold blood in a Roman dungeon.

\* Tacitus, "Annals," ii. 88.

It was true that Rome was no longer the great military republic, which for so many ages had shattered the kingdoms of the world. Her system of government was changed; and after a century of revolution and civil war, she had placed herself under the despotism of a single ruler. But the discipline of her troops was yet unimpaired, and her warlike spirit seemed unabated. The first years of the empire had been signalized by conquests as valuable as any gained by the republic in a corresponding period. It is a great fallacy, though apparently sanctioned by great authorities, to suppose that the foreign policy pursued by Augustus was pacific; he certainly recommended such a policy to his successors (*incertum metu an per invidiam*, TAC. *Ann.* i. 11), but he himself, until Arminius broke his spirit, had followed a very different course. Besides his Spanish wars, his generals, in a series of generally aggressive campaigns, had extended the Roman frontier from the Alps to the Danube; and had reduced into subjection the large and important countries that now form the territories of all Austria south of that river, and of East Switzerland, Lower Wirtemberg, Bavaria, the Valtelline, and the Tyrol. While the progress of the Roman arms thus pressed the Germans from the south, still more formidable inroads had been made by the Imperial

legions on the west. Roman armies, moving from the province of Gaul, established a chain of fortresses along the right as well as the left bank of the Rhine, and, in a series of victorious campaigns, advanced their eagles as far as the Elbe; which now seemed added to the list of vassal rivers, to the Nile, the Rhine, the Rhone, the Danube, the Tagus, the Seine, and many more, that acknowledged the supremacy of the Tiber. Roman fleets also, sailing from the harbours of Gaul along the German coasts and up the estuaries, co-operated with the land-forces of the empire, and seemed to display, even more decisively than her armies, her overwhelming superiority over the rude Germanic tribes. Throughout the territory thus invaded, the Romans had, with their usual military skill, established fortified posts; and a powerful army of occupation was kept on foot, ready to move instantly on any spot where any popular outbreak might be attempted.

Vast, however, and admirably organized as the fabric of Roman power appeared on the frontiers and in the provinces, there was rottenness at the core. In Rome's unceasing hostilities with foreign foes, and still more, in her long series of desolating civil wars, the free middle classes of Italy had almost wholly disappeared. Above the position which they had occupied, an oligarchy of wealth



had reared itself: beneath that position a degraded mass of poverty and misery was fermenting. Slaves, the chance sweepings of every conquered country, shoals of Africans, Sardinians, Asiatics, Illyrians, and others made up the bulk of the population of the Italian Peninsula. The foulest profligacy of manners was general in all ranks. In universal weariness of revolution and civil war, and in consciousness of being too debased for self-government, the nation had submitted itself to the absolute authority of Augustus. Adulation was now the chief function of the senate: and the gifts of genius and accomplishments of art were devoted to the elaboration of eloquently false panegyrics upon the prince and his favourite courtiers. With bitter indignation must the German chieftain have beheld all this, and contrasted with it the rough worth of his own countrymen:—their bravery, their fidelity to their word, their manly independence of spirit, their love of their national free institutions, and their loathing of every pollution and meanness. Above all, he must have thought of the domestic virtues that hallowed a German home; of the respect there shown to the female character, and of the pure affection by which that respect was repaid. His soul must have burned within him at the contemplation of such a race yielding to these debased Italians.

Still, to persuade the Germans to combine, in

spite of their frequent feuds among themselves, in one sudden outbreak against Rome; to keep the scheme concealed from the Romans until the hour for action arrived; and then, without possessing a single walled town, without military stores, without training, to teach his insurgent countrymen to defeat veteran armies, and storm fortifications, seemed so perilous an enterprise, that probably Arminius would have receded from it, had not a stronger feeling even than patriotism urged him on. Among the Germans of high rank, who had most readily submitted to the invaders, and become zealous partizans of Roman authority, was a chieftain named Segestes. His daughter, Thusnelda, was preeminent among the noble maidens of Germany. Arminius had sought her hand in marriage; but Segestes, who probably discerned the young chief's disaffection to Rome, forbade his suit, and strove to preclude all communication between him and his daughter. Thusnelda, however, sympathized far more with the heroic spirit of her lover, than with the time-serving policy of her father. An elopement baffled the precautions of Segestes; who, disappointed in his hope of preventing the marriage, accused Arminius, before the Roman governor, of having carried off his daughter, and of planning treason against Rome. Thus assailed, and dreading to see his bride torn from him by the

officials of the foreign oppressor, Arminius delayed no longer, but bent all his energies to organize and execute a general insurrection of the great mass of his countrymen, who hitherto had submitted in sullen hatred to the Roman dominion.

A change of governors had recently taken place, which, while it materially favoured the ultimate success of the insurgents, served, by the immediate aggravation of the Roman oppressions which it produced, to make the native population more universally eager to take arms. Tiberius, who was afterwards emperor, had recently been recalled from the command in Germany, and sent into Pannonia to put down a dangerous revolt which had broken out against the Romans in that province. The German patriots were thus delivered from the stern supervision of one of the most suspicious of mankind, and were also relieved from having to contend against the high military talents of a veteran commander, who thoroughly understood their national character, and also the nature of the country, which he himself had principally subdued. In the room of Tiberius, Augustus sent into Germany Quintilius Varus, who had lately returned from the proconsulate of Syria. Varus was a true representative of the higher classes of the Romans; among whom a general taste for literature, a keen susceptibility to all

intellectual gratifications, a minute acquaintance with the principles and practice of their own national jurisprudence, a careful training in the schools of the rhetoricians, and a fondness for either partaking in or watching the intellectual strife of forensic oratory, had become generally diffused, without, however, having humanized the old Roman spirit of cruel indifference for human feelings and human sufferings, and without acting as the least checks on unprincipled avarice and ambition, or on habitual and gross profligacy. Accustomed to govern the depraved and debased natives of Syria, a country where courage in man, and virtue in woman, had for centuries been unknown, Varus thought that he might gratify his licentious and rapacious passions with equal impunity among the high-minded sons and pure-spirited daughters of Germany. When the general of an army sets the example of outrages of this description, he is soon faithfully imitated by his officers, and surpassed by his still more brutal soldiery. The Romans now habitually indulged in those violations of the sanctity of the domestic shrine, and those insults upon honour and modesty, by which far less gallant spirits than those of our Teutonic ancestors have often been maddened into insurrection.\*

\* I cannot forbear quoting Macaulay's beautiful lines, where

Arminius found among the other German chiefs many who sympathised with him in his indignation at their country's abasement, and many whom private wrongs had stung yet more deeply. There was little difficulty in collecting bold leaders for an attack on the oppressors, and little fear of the population not rising readily at those leaders' call. But to declare open war against Rome, and to encounter Varus's army in a pitched battle, would have been merely rushing upon certain destruction. Varus had three legions under him, a force which, after allowing for detachments, cannot be estimated at less than fourteen thousand Roman infantry. He had also eight or nine hundred Roman cavalry, and at least an equal number of horse and foot sent from the allied states, or raised among those provincials who had not received the Roman franchise.

he describes how similar outrages in the early times of Rome goaded the plebeians to rise against the patricians.

"Heap heavier still the fetters; bar closer still the grate;  
Patient as sheep we yield us up unto your cruel hate.  
But by the shades beneath us, and by the gods above,  
Add not unto your cruel hate your still more cruel love.

\* \* \* \*

Then leave the poor plebeian his single tie to life—  
The sweet, sweet love of daughter, of sister, and of wife,  
The gentle speech, the balm for all that his vex'd soul  
endures,  
The kiss in which he half forgets even such a yoke as yours.

It was not merely the number but the quality of this force that made them formidable; and however contemptible Varus might be as a general, Arminius well knew how admirably the Roman armies were organized and officered, and how perfectly the legionaries understood every manœuvre and every duty which the varying emergencies of a stricken field might require. Stratagem was, therefore, indispensable; and it was necessary to blind Varus to their schemes until a favourable opportunity should arrive for striking a decisive blow.

For this purpose, the German confederates frequented the head-quarters of Varus, which seem to have been near the centre of the modern country of Westphalia, where the Roman general conducted himself with all the arrogant security of the governor of a perfectly submissive province. There Varus gratified at once his vanity, his rhetorical tastes, and his avarice, by holding courts, to which he summoned the Germans for the settle-

Still let the maiden's beauty swell the father's breast with  
pride;

Still let the bridegroom's arms enfold an unpolluted bride.

Spare us the inexpiable wrong, the unutterable shame,

That turns the coward's heart to steel, the sluggard's blood  
to flame;

Lest when our latest hope is fled ye taste of our despair,

And learn by proof, in some wild hour, how much the  
wretched dare."

ment of all their disputes, while a bar of Roman advocates attended to argue the cases before the tribunal of Varus ; who did not omit the opportunity of exacting court-fees and accepting bribes. Varus trusted implicitly to the respect which the Germans pretended to pay to his abilities as a judge, and to the interest which they affected to take in the forensic eloquence of their conquerors. Meanwhile a succession of heavy rains rendered the country more difficult for the operations of regular troops, and Arminius, seeing that the infatuation of Varus was complete, secretly directed the tribes, near the Weser and the Ems, to take up arms in open revolt against the Romans. This was represented to Varus as an occasion which required his prompt attendance at the spot ; but he was kept in studied ignorance of its being part of a concerted national rising ; and he still looked on Arminius as his submissive vassal, whose aid he might rely on in facilitating the march of his troops against the rebels, and in extinguishing the local disturbance. He therefore set his army in motion, and marched eastward in a line parallel to the course of the Lippe. For some distance his route lay along a level plain ; but on arriving at the tract between the curve of the upper part of that stream and the sources of the Ems, the country assumes a very different character ; and here, in

the territory of the modern little principality of Lippe, it was that Arminius had fixed the scene of his enterprise.

A woody and hilly region intervenes between the heads of the two rivers, and forms the watershed of their streams. This region still retains the name (*Teutoberger wald* = *Teutobergiensis saltus*) which it bore in the days of Arminius. The nature of the ground has probably also remained unaltered. The eastern part of it, round Detmold, the modern capital of the principality of Lippe, is described by a modern German scholar, Dr. Plate, as being a "table-land intersected by numerous deep and narrow valleys, which in some places form small plains, surrounded by steep mountains and rocks, and only accessible by narrow defiles. All the valleys are traversed by rapid streams, shallow in the dry season, but subject to sudden swellings in autumn and winter. The vast forests which cover the summits and slopes of the hills consist chiefly of oak; there is little underwood, and both men and horse would move with ease in the forests if the ground were not broken by gulleys, or rendered impracticable by fallen trees." This is the district to which Varus is supposed to have marched; and Dr. Plate adds, that "the names of several localities on and near that spot seem to indicate that a great



battle has once been fought there. We find the names 'das Winnefeld' (the field of victory), 'die Knochenbahn' (the bone-lane), 'die Knochenleke' (the bone-brook), 'der Mordkessel' (the kettle of slaughter), and others." \*

Contrary to the usual strict principles of Roman discipline, Varus had suffered his army to be accompanied and impeded by an immense train of baggage-waggons, and by a rabble of camp followers; as if his troops had been merely changing their quarters in a friendly country. When the long array quitted the firm level ground, and began to wind its way among the woods, the marshes, and the ravines, the difficulties of the march, even without the intervention of an armed foe, became fearfully apparent. In many places the soil, sodden with rain, was impracticable for cavalry and even for infantry, until trees had been felled, and a rude causeway formed through the morass.

The duties of the engineer were familiar to all who served in the Roman armies. But the crowd and confusion of the columns embarrassed the working parties of the soldiery, and in the midst of their toil and disorder the word was suddenly passed through their ranks that the rear-guard was attacked by the barbarians. Varus resolved on

\* I am indebted for much valuable information on this subject to my friend Mr. Henry Pearson.

pressing forward; but a heavy discharge of missiles from the woods on either flank, taught him how serious was the peril, and he saw his best men falling round him without the opportunity of retaliation; for his light-armed auxiliaries, who were principally of Germanic race, now rapidly deserted, and it was impossible to deploy the legionaries on such broken ground, for a charge against the enemy. Choosing one of the most open and firm spots which they could force their way to, the Romans halted for the night; and, faithful to their national discipline and tactics, formed their camp amid the harassing attacks of the rapidly thronging foes, with the elaborate toil and systematic skill, the traces of which are impressed permanently on the soil of so many European countries, attesting the presence in the olden time of the imperial eagles.

On the morrow the Romans renewed their march; the veteran officers who served under Varus, now probably directing the operations, and hoping to find the Germans drawn up to meet them; in which case they relied on their own superior discipline and tactics for such a victory as should reassure the supremacy of Rome. But Arminius was far too sage a commander to lead on his followers with their unwieldy broadswords and inefficient defensive armour, against the Roman

legionaries, fully armed with helmet, cuirass, greaves, and shield; who were skilled to commence the conflict with a murderous volley of heavy javelins, hurled upon the foe when a few yards distant, and then, with their short cut-and-thrust swords, to hew their way through all opposition; preserving the utmost steadiness and coolness, and obeying each word of command in the midst of strife and slaughter, with the same precision and alertness as if upon parade.\* Arminius suffered the Romans to march out from their camp, to form first in line for action, and then in column for marching, without the show of opposition. For some distance Varus was allowed to move on, only harassed by slight skirmishes, but struggling with difficulty through the broken ground, the toil and distress of his men being aggravated by heavy torrents of rain, which burst upon the devoted legions, as if the angry gods of Germany were pouring out the vials of their wrath upon the invaders. After some little time their van approached a ridge of high woody ground, which is one of the offshoots of the great Hercynian forest, and is situate between the modern villages of Driburg and Bielefeld. Arminius had caused barricades of hewn trees to be

\* See Gibbon's description (vol. i. chapter 1) of the Roman regions in the time of Augustus; and see the description in Tacitus, "Ann." lib. i. of the subsequent battles between Cæcina and Arminius.

formed here, so as to add to the natural difficulties of the passage. Fatigue and discouragement now began to betray themselves in the Roman ranks. Their line became less steady ; baggage-waggon were abandoned from the impossibility of forcing them along ; and, as this happened, many soldiers left their ranks and crowded round the waggons to secure the most valuable portions of their property : each was busy about his own affairs, and purposely slow in hearing the word of command from his officers. Arminius now gave the signal for a general attack. The fierce shouts of the Germans pealed through the gloom of the forests, and in thronging multitudes they assailed the flanks of the invaders, pouring in clouds of darts on the encumbered legionaries, as they struggled up the glens or floundered in the morasses, and watching every opportunity of charging through the intervals of the disjointed column, and so cutting off the communication between its several brigades. Arminius, with a chosen band of personal retainers round him, cheered on his countrymen by voice and example. He and his men aimed their weapons particularly at the horses of the Roman cavalry. The wounded animals, slipping about in the mire and their own blood, threw their riders and plunged among the ranks of the legions, disordering all round them. Varus now ordered the troops to

be countermarched, in the hope of reaching the nearest Roman garrison on the Lippe.\* But retreat now was as impracticable as advance; and the falling back of the Romans only augmented the courage of their assailants, and caused fiercer and more frequent charges on the flanks of the disheartened army. The Roman officer who commanded the cavalry, Numonius Vala, rode off with his squadrons in the vain hope of escaping by thus abandoning his comrades. Unable to keep together, or force their way across the woods and swamps, the horsemen were overpowered in detail and slaughtered to the last man. The Roman infantry still held together and resisted, but more through the instinct of discipline and bravery than from any hope of success or escape. Varus, after

\* The circumstances of the early part of the battle which Arminius fought with Cæcina six years afterwards, evidently resembled those of his battle with Varus, and the result was very near being the same: I have therefore adopted part of the description which Tacitus gives ("Annal." lib. i. c. 65) of the last-mentioned engagement. "Neque tamen Arminius, quamquam libero incursu, statim prorupit: sed ut hæserè cæno fossisque impedimenta, turbati circum milites; incertus signorum ordo; utque tali in tempore sibi quisque properus, et lentæ adversum imperia aures, irrumpere Germanos jubet, clamitans 'En Varus, et eodem iterum fato victæ legiones!' Simul hæc, et cum delectis scindit agmen, equisque maxime vulnera ingerit; illi sanguine suo et lubrico paludum lapsantes, excussis rectoribus, disjicere obvios, proterere jacentes."

being severely wounded in a charge of the Germans against his part of the column, committed suicide to avoid falling into the hands of those whom he had exasperated by his oppressions. One of the lieutenant-generals of the army fell fighting; the other surrendered to the enemy. But mercy to a fallen foe had never been a Roman virtue, and those among her legions who now laid down their arms in hope of quarter, drank deep of the cup of suffering, which Rome had held to the lips of many a brave but unfortunate enemy. The infuriated Germans slaughtered their oppressors with deliberate ferocity; and those prisoners who were not hewn to pieces on the spot, were only preserved to perish by a more cruel death in cold blood.

The bulk of the Roman army fought steadily and stubbornly, frequently repelling the masses of the assailants, but gradually losing the compactness of their array, and becoming weaker and weaker beneath the incessant shower of darts and the reiterated assaults of the vigorous and unencumbered Germans. At last, in a series of desperate attacks, the column was pierced through and through, two of the eagles captured, and the Roman host, which on the yester morning had marched forth in such pride and might, now broken up into confused fragments, either fell fighting beneath the overpowering numbers of

the enemy, or perished in the swamps and woods in unavailing efforts at flight. Few, very few, ever saw again the left bank of the Rhine. One body of brave veterans, arraying themselves in a ring on a little mound, beat off every charge of the Germans, and prolonged their honourable resistance to the close of that dreadful day. The traces of a feeble attempt at forming a ditch and mound attested in after years the spot where the last of the Romans passed their night of suffering and despair. But on the morrow, this remnant also, worn out with hunger, wounds, and toil, was charged by the victorious Germans, and either massacred on the spot, or offered up in fearful rites at the altars of the deities of the old mythology of the North.

A gorge in the mountain ridge, through which runs the modern road between Paderborn and Pyrmont, leads from the spot where the heat of the battle raged, to the Extersteine, a cluster of bold and grotesque rocks of sandstone; near which is a small sheet of water, overshadowed by a grove of aged trees. According to local tradition this was one of the sacred groves of the ancient Germans, and it was here that the Roman captives were slain in sacrifice by the victorious warriors of Arminius.\*

\* "Lucis propinquis barbaræ aræ, apud quas tribunos ac primorum ordinum centuriones mactaverant."—TACITUS, *Ann.* lib. i. c. 61.

Never was victory more decisive, never was the liberation of an oppressed people more instantaneous and complete. Throughout Germany the Roman garrisons were assailed and cut off; and, within a few weeks after Varus had fallen, the German soil was freed from the foot of an invader.

At Rome the tidings of the battle were received with an agony of terror, the reports of which we should deem exaggerated, did they not come from Roman historians themselves. They not only tell emphatically how great was the awe which the Romans felt of the prowess of the Germans, if their various tribes could be brought to unite for a common purpose,\* but also they reveal how weakened and debased the population of Italy had become. Dion Cassius says (lib. lvi. sec. 23),—"Then Augustus, when he heard the calamity of Varus, rent his garment, and was in great affliction for the troops he had lost, and for terror respecting

\* It is clear that the Romans followed the policy of fomenting dissensions and wars of the Germans among themselves. See the thirty-third section of the "Germania" of Tacitus, where he mentions the destruction of the Bructeri by the neighbouring tribes: "*Favore quodam erga nos deorum: nam ne spectaculo quidem prœlii invidere: super lx. millia non armis telisque Romanis, sed quod magnificentius est, oblectationi oculisque ceciderunt. Maneat quæso, duretque gentibus, si non amor nostri, at certe odium sui: quando urgentibus imperii fati, nihil jam præstare fortuna majus potest quam hostium discordiam.*"



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nightly heavens glowed several times, as if on fire. Many comets blazed forth together; and fiery meteors, shaped like spears, had shot from the northern quarter of the sky, down into the Roman camps. It was said, too, that a statue of Victory, which had stood at a place on the frontier, pointing the way towards Germany, had, of its own accord, turned round, and now pointed to Italy. These and other prodigies were believed by the multitude to accompany the slaughter of Varus's legions, and to manifest the anger of the gods against Rome. Augustus himself was not free from superstition; but on this occasion no supernatural terrors were needed to increase the alarm and grief that he felt; and which made him, even months after the news of the battle had arrived, often beat his head against the wall, and exclaim, "Quintilius Varus, give me back my legions." We learn this from his biographer Suetonius; and indeed, every ancient writer who alludes to the overthrow of Varus, attests the importance of the blow against the Roman power, and the bitterness with which it was felt.\*

The Germans did not pursue their victory beyond their own territory. But that victory se-

\* Florus expresses its effect most pithily. "*Hæc clade factum est ut imperium quod in litore oceani non steterat, in ripâ Rheni fluminis staret,*" iv. 12.

cured at once and for ever the independence of the Teutonic race. Rome sent, indeed, her legions again into Germany, to parade a temporary superiority; but all hopes of permanent conquests were abandoned by Augustus and his successors.

The blow which Arminius had struck, never was forgotten. Roman fear disguised itself under the specious title of moderation: and the Rhine became the acknowledged boundary of the two nations, until the fifth century of our era, when the Germans became the assailants, and carved with their conquering swords the provinces of Imperial Rome into the kingdoms of modern Europe.

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#### ARMINIUS.

I have said above that the great Cheruscan is more truly one of our national heroes than Carac-tacus is. It may be added that an Englishman is entitled to claim a closer degree of relationship with Arminius than can be claimed by any German of modern Germany. The proof of this depends on the proof of four facts; first, that the Cherusicans were Old Saxons, or Saxons of the interior of Germany; secondly, that the Anglo-Saxons, or Saxons of the coast of Germany, were more closely akin than other German tribes were to the Cheruscan Saxons; thirdly, that the Old Saxons were

almost exterminated by Charlemagne; fourthly, that the Anglo-Saxons are our immediate ancestors. The last of these may be assumed as an axiom in English history. The proofs of the other three are partly philological, and partly historical. I have not space to go into them here, but they will be found in the early chapters of the great work of my friend Dr. Robert Gordon Latham on the "English Language;" and in the notes to his forthcoming edition of the "Germania of Tacitus." It may be, however, here remarked that the present Saxons of Germany are of the High Germanic division of the German race, whereas, both the Anglo-Saxon and Old Saxon were of the Low Germanic.

Being thus the nearest heirs of the glory of Arminius, we may fairly devote more attention to his career than, in such a work as the present, could be allowed to any individual leader. And it is interesting to trace how far his fame survived during the middle ages, both among the Germans of the Continent and among ourselves.

It seems probable that the jealousy with which Maroboduus, the king of the Suevi and Marcomanni, regarded Arminius, and which ultimately broke out into open hostilities between those German tribes and the Cherusci, prevented Arminius from leading the confederate Germans to

attack Italy after his first victory. Perhaps he may have had the rare moderation of being content with the liberation of his country without seeking to retaliate on her former oppressors. When Tiberius marched into Germany in the year 10, Arminius was too cautious to attack him on ground favourable to the legions, and Tiberius was too skilful to entangle his troops in the difficult parts of the country. His march and counter-march were as unresisted as they were unproductive. A few years later, when a dangerous revolt of the Roman legions near the frontier, caused their generals to find them active employment by leading them into the interior of Germany, we find Arminius again active in his country's defence. The old quarrel between him and his father-in-law, Segestes, had broken out afresh. Segestes now called in the aid of the Roman general, Germanicus, to whom he surrendered himself; and by his contrivance, his daughter Thusnelda, the wife of Arminius, also came into the hands of the Romans, being far advanced in pregnancy. She showed, as Tacitus relates,\* more of the spirit of her husband than of her father, a spirit that could not be subdued into tears or supplications. She was sent to Ravenna, and there gave birth to a son, whose life we know, from an allusion in

\* "Ann." i. 57.

Tacitus, to have been eventful and unhappy ; but the part of the great historian's work which narrated his fate, has perished, and we only know from another quarter that the son of Arminius was, at the age of four years, led captive in a triumphal pageant along the streets of Rome.

The high spirit of Arminius was goaded almost into frenzy by these bereavements. The fate of his wife, thus torn from him, and of his babe doomed to bondage even before its birth, inflamed the eloquent invectives with which he roused his countrymen against the home-traitors, and against their invaders, who thus made war upon women and children. Germanicus had marched his army to the place where Varus had perished, and had there paid funeral honours to the ghastly relics of his predecessor's legions, that he found heaped around him.\* Arminius lured him to advance a little further into the country, and then assailed him, and fought a battle, which, by the Roman accounts, was a drawn one. The effect of it was to make Germanicus resolve on retreating to the Rhine. He himself, with part of his troops, embarked in some vessels on the Ems, and returned by that river, and then by sea ; but

\* In the Museum of Rhenish Antiquities at Bonn, there is a Roman sepulchral monument, the inscription on which records that it was erected to the memory of M. Cœlius, who fell "*Bello Variano*."

part of his forces were entrusted to a Roman general named Cæcina, to lead them back by land, to the Rhine. Arminius followed this division on its march, and fought several battles with it, in which he inflicted heavy loss on the Romans, captured the greater part of their baggage, and would have destroyed them completely, had not his skilful system of operations been finally thwarted by the haste of Inguiomerus, a confederate German chief, who insisted on assaulting the Romans in their camp, instead of waiting till they were entangled in the difficulties of the country, and assailing their columns on the march.

In the following year the Romans were inactive; but in the year afterwards, Germanicus led a fresh invasion. He placed his army on ship-board, and sailed to the mouth of the Ems, where he disembarked, and marched to the Weser, where he encamped, probably in the neighbourhood of Minden. Arminius had collected his army on the other side of the river; and a scene occurred, which is powerfully told by Tacitus, and which is the subject of a beautiful poem by Praed. It has been already mentioned that the brother of Arminius, like himself, had been trained up while young to serve in the Roman armies; but, unlike Arminius, he not only refused to quit the Roman service for that of his country, but

fought against his country with the legions of Germanicus. He had assumed the Roman name of Flavius, and had gained considerable distinction in the Roman service, in which he had lost an eye from a wound in battle. When the Roman outposts approached the river Weser, Arminius called out to them from the opposite bank, and expressed a wish to see his brother. Flavius stepped forward, and Arminius ordered his own followers to retire, and requested that the archers should be removed from the Roman bank of the river. This was done; and the brothers, who apparently had not seen each other for some years, began a conversation from the opposite sides of the stream, in which Arminius questioned his brother respecting the loss of his eye, and what battle it had been lost in, and what reward he had received for his wound. Flavius told him how the eye was lost, and mentioned the increased pay that he had on account of its loss, and showed the collar and other military decorations that had been given him. Arminius mocked at these as badges of slavery; and then each began to try to win the other over, Flavius boasting the power of Rome, and her generosity to the submissive; Arminius appealing to him in the name of their country's gods, of the mother that had born them, and by the holy names of fatherland and freedom, not to prefer



being the betrayer to being the champion of his country. They soon proceeded to mutual taunts and menaces, and Flavius called aloud for his horse and his arms, that he might dash across the river and attack his brother; nor would he have been checked from doing so, had not the Roman general, Stertinius, run up to him, and forcibly detained him. Arminius stood on the other bank, threatening the renegade, and defying him to battle.

I shall not be thought to need apology for quoting here the stanzas in which Præd has described this scene,—a scene among the most affecting, as well as the most striking, that history supplies. It makes us reflect on the desolate position of Arminius, with his wife and children captives in the enemy's hands, and with his brother a renegade in arms against him. The great liberator of our German race was there, with every source of human happiness denied him, except the consciousness of doing his duty to his country.

Back, back !—he fears not foaming flood  
Who fears not steel-clad line :—  
No warrior thou of German blood,  
No brother thou of mine.  
Go, earn Rome's chain to load thy neck,  
Her gems to deck thy hilt ;  
And blazon honour's hapless wreck  
With all the gauds of guilt.

But wouldst thou have *me* share the prey ?  
By all that I have done,  
The Varian bones that day by day  
Lie whitening in the sun,  
The legion's trampled panoply,  
The eagle's shatter'd wing,—  
I would not be for earth or sky  
So scorn'd and mean a thing.

Ho, call me here the wizard, boy,  
Of dark and subtle skill,  
To agonise but not destroy,  
To torture, not to kill.  
When swords are out, and shriek and shout  
Leave little room for prayer,  
No fetter on man's arm or heart  
Hangs half so heavy there.

I curse him by the gifts, the land  
Hath won from him and Rome,  
The riving axe, the wasting brand,  
Rent forest, blazing home.  
I curse him by our country's gods,  
The terrible, the dark,  
The breakers of the Roman rods,  
The smiters of the bark.

Oh, misery that such a ban  
On such a brow should be !  
Why comes he not in battle's van  
His country's chief to be ?—  
To stand a comrade by my side,  
The sharer of my fame,  
And worthy of a brother's pride  
And of a brother's name ?

But it is past !—where heroes press  
And cowards bend the knee,  
Arminius is not brotherless,  
His brethren are the free.  
They come around :—one hour, and light  
Will fade from turf and tide,  
Then onward, onward to the fight  
With darkness for our guide.

To-night, to-night, when we shall meet  
In combat face to face,  
Then only would Arminius greet  
The renegade's embrace.  
The canker of Rome's guilt shall be  
Upon his dying name ;  
And as he lived in slavery,  
So shall he fall in shame.

On the day after the Romans had reached the Weser, Germanicus led his army across that river and a partial encounter took place, in which Arminius was successful. But on the succeeding day, a general action was fought, in which Arminius was severely wounded, and the German infantry routed with heavy loss. The horsemen of the two armies encountered, without either party gaining the advantage. But the Roman army remained master of the ground, and claimed a complete victory. Germanicus erected a trophy in the field, with a vaunting inscription, that the nations between the Rhine and the Elbe had been thoroughly conquered by his army. But the

army speedily made a final retreat to the left bank of the Rhine; nor was the effect of their campaign more durable than their trophy. The sarcasm with which Tacitus speaks of certain other triumphs of Roman generals over Germans, may apply to the pageant, which Germanicus celebrated on his return to Rome from his command of the Roman army of the Rhine. The Germans were "*triumphati potius quam victi.*"

After the Romans had abandoned their attempts on Germany, we find Arminius engaged in hostilities with Maroboduus, the king of the Suevi and Marcomanni, who was endeavouring to bring the other German tribes into a state of dependency on him. Arminius was at the head of the Germans, who took up arms against this home invader of their liberties. After some minor engagements, a pitched battle was fought between the two confederacies, A.D. 19, in which the loss on each side was equal; but Maroboduus confessed the ascendancy of his antagonist by avoiding a renewal of the engagement, and by imploring the intervention of the Romans in his defence. The younger Drusus then commanded the Roman legions in the province of Illyricum, and by his mediation a peace was concluded between Arminius and Maroboduus, by the terms of which it is evident that the latter must have renounced his

ambitious schemes against the freedom of the other German tribes.

Arminius did not long survive this second war of independence, which he successfully waged for his country. He was assassinated in the thirtieth seventh year of his age, by some of his own kinsmen, who conspired against him. Tacitus says that this happened while he was engaged in a civil war, which had been caused by his attempts to make himself king over his countrymen. It is far more probable (as one of the best biographers has observed), that Tacitus misunderstood an attempt of Arminius to extend his influence as elective war-chieftain of the Cherusci, and other tribes, for an attempt to obtain the royal dignity. When we remember that his father-in-law and his brother were renegades, we can well understand that a party among his kinsmen may have been bitterly hostile to him, and have opposed his authority with the tribe by open violence, and when that seemed ineffectual, by secret assassination.

Arminius left a name, which the historians of the nation against which he combated so long and so gloriously, have delighted to honour. It is from the most indisputable source, from the lips

\* Dr. Plate, in "Biographical Dictionary," commenced by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.

of enemies, that we know his exploits.\* His countrymen made history, but did not write it. But his memory lived among them in the lays of their bards, who recorded—

The deeds he did, the fields he won,  
The freedom he restored.

Tacitus, writing years after the death of Arminius, says of him, "*Canitur adhuc barbaras apud gentes.*" As time passed on, the gratitude of ancient Germany to her great deliverer grew into adoration, and divine honours were paid for centuries to Arminius by every tribe of the Low Germanic division of the Teutonic races. The Irmin-sul, or the column of Herman, near Eresburg, the modern Stadtberg, was the chosen object of worship to the descendants of the Cherusci, the Old Saxons, and in defence of which they fought most desperately against Charlemagne and his christianized Franks. "Irmin, in the cloudy Olympus of Teutonic belief, appears as a king and a warrior; and the pillar, the 'Irmin-sul,' bearing the statue, and considered as the symbol of the deity, was the Palladium of the Saxon nation, until the temple of Eresburgh was destroyed by Charlemagne, and the column itself transferred to the monastery of Corbey, where,

\* See Tacitus, "Ann." lib. ii. sec. 88; Velleius Paterculus, lib. ii. sec. 118.

perhaps, a portion of the rude rock idol yet remains, covered by the ornaments of the Gothic era.\* Traces of the worship of Arminius are to be found among our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, after their settlement in this island. One of the four great highways was held to be under the protection of the deity, and was called the "Irmin street." The name Arminius is, of course, the mere Latinized form of "Herman," the name by which the hero and the deity were known by every man of Low German blood, on either side of the German sea. It means, etymologically, the "War-man," the "man of hosts." No other explanation of the worship of the "Irminsúl," and of the name of the "Irmin-street," is so satisfactory as that which connects them with the deified Arminius. We know for certain of the existence of other columns of an analogous character. Thus, there was the Roland-seule in North Germany; there was a Thor-seule in Sweden, and (what is more important) there was an Athelstan-seule in Saxon England.†

There is at the present moment a song respect-

\* Palgrave on the "English Commonwealth," vol. ii. p. 140.

† See Lappenburg's "Anglo-Saxons," p. 376. For nearly all the philological and ethnographical facts respecting Arminius, I am indebted to my friend Dr. R. G. Latham.

ing the Irminsul current in the bishopric of Minden, one version of which might seem only to refer to Charlemagne having pulled down the Irminsul.

Herman, sla dermen,  
Sla pipen, sla trummen,  
De Kaiser will kummen,  
Met hamer un stangen,  
Will Herman uphangen.

But there is another version, which probably is the oldest, and which clearly refers to the great Arminius.

Un Herman slaug dermen,  
Slaug pipen, slaug trummen ;  
De fürsten sind kammen,  
Met all eren-mannen  
Hebt *Varus* uphangen.\*

About ten centuries and a half after the demolition of the Irminsul, and nearly eighteen after the death of Arminius, the modern Germans conceived the idea of rendering tardy homage to their great hero; and accordingly, some eight or ten years ago, a general subscription was organized in Germany, for the purpose of erecting, on the Osning—a conical mountain, which forms the highest summit of the Teutoberger Wald, and is  
\* eighteen hundred feet above the level of the sea—a colossal bronze statue of Arminius. The statue was designed by Bandel. The hero was to stand

\* See Grimm, "Deutsche Mythologie," 329.



uplifting a sword in his right hand, and looking towards the Rhine. The height of the statue was to be eighty feet from the base to the point of the sword, and was to stand on a circular Gothic temple ninety feet high, and supported by oak trees as columns. The mountain, where it was to be erected, is wild and stern, and overlooks the scene of the battle. It was calculated that the statue would be clearly visible at a distance of sixty miles. The temple is nearly finished, and the statue itself has been cast at the copper works at Lemgo. But there, through want of funds to set it up, it has lain for some years, in disjointed fragments, exposed to the mutilating homage of relic-seeking travellers. The idea of honouring a hero, who belongs to *all* Germany, is not one which the present rulers of that divided country have any wish to encourage; and the statue may long continue to lie there, and present too true a type of the condition of Germany herself.\*

Surely this is an occasion in which Englishmen might well prove, by acts as well as words, that we also rank Arminius among our heroes.

I have quoted the noble stanzas of one of our modern English poets on Arminius, and I will conclude this memoir with one of the odes of the

\* On the subject of this statue I must repeat an acknowledgment of my obligations to my friend Mr. Henry Pearson.

great poet of modern Germany, Klopstock, on the victory to which we owe our freedom, and Arminius mainly owes his fame. Klopstock calls it the "Battle of Winfeld." The epithet of "sister of Cannæ" shows that Klopstock followed some chronologers, according to whom Varus was defeated on the anniversary of the day on which Paulus and Varro were defeated by Hannibal.

SONG OF TRIUMPH AFTER THE VICTORY OF HERRMAN,  
THE DELIVERER OF GERMANY FROM THE ROMANS.

FROM KLOPSTOCK'S "HERRMAN UND DIE FÜRSTEN."

*Supposed to be sung by a chorus of Bards.*

A CHORUS.

Sister of Cannæ ! \* Winfeld's † fight !  
We saw thee with thy streaming, bloody hair,  
With fiery eye, bright with the world's despair,  
Sweep by Walhalla's bards from out our sight.

Herrman outspake—"Now Victory, or Death !"  
The Romans . . . "Victory !"  
And onward rushed their eagles with the cry—  
—So ended the *first* day.

"Victory, or Death !" began  
Then, first, the Roman chief—and Herrman spake  
Not, but home-struck :—the eagles fluttered—brake—  
—So sped the *second* day.

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\* The battle of Cannæ, B.C. 216 — Hannibal's victory over the Romans.

† Winfeld — the probable site of the "*Herrmanschlacht*," see *supra*.

## TWO CHORUSES.

And the third came . . . the cry was, "Flight, or Death !"  
 Flight left they not for them who'd make them slaves—  
 Men who stab children !—flight for them ! . . . no ! grave  
 "Twas their *last* day."

## TWO BARDS.

Yet spared they messengers :—they came to Rome—  
 How drooped the plume—the lance was left to trail  
 Down in the dust behind—their cheek was pale—  
 So came the messengers to Rome.

High in his hall the *imperator* sate—  
*Octavianus Cæsar Augustus* sate.  
 They filled up wine-cups, wine-cups filled they up  
 For him the highest—wine-cups filled they up  
 For him the highest, Jove of all their state.

The flutes of Lydia hushed before their voice,  
 Before the messengers—the "Highest" sprung—  
 The god\* against the marble pillars, wrung  
 By the dread words, striking his brow, and thrice  
 Cried he aloud in anguish—"Varus ! Varus !  
 Give back my legions, Varus !"—

And now the world-wide conquerors shrunk and feared  
 For fatherland and home,  
 The lance to raise ; and 'mongst those false to Rome  
 The death-lot rolled,† and still they shrunk and feared ;  
 "For she her face hath turned  
 The victor goddess," cried those cowards—(for aye  
 Be it !)—"from Rome and Romans, and her day  
 Is done,"—and still he mourned,

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\* Augustus was worshipped as a deity in his lifetime.

† See *supra*, p. 234.

And cried aloud in anguish—"Varus! Varus!  
Give back my legions, Varus!" \*

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SYNOPSIS OF EVENTS BETWEEN ARMINIUS'S VICTORY OVER VARUS, AND THE BATTLE OF CHALONS.

A.D. 43. The Romans commence the conquest of Britain, Claudius being then emperor of Rome. The population of this island was then Celtic. In about forty years all the tribes south of the Clyde were subdued, and their land made a Roman province.

58—60. Successful campaigns of the Roman General Corbulo against the Parthians.

64. First persecution of the Christians at Rome under Nero.

68—70. Civil wars in the Roman world. The Emperors Nero, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, cut off successively by violent deaths. Vespasian becomes emperor.

70. Jerusalem destroyed by the Romans under Titus.

83. Futile attack of Domitian on the German.

86. Beginning of the wars between the Romans and the Dacians.

\* I have taken this translation from an anonymous writer in "Frazer," two years ago.

**254      SYNOPSIS OF EVENTS AFTER**

98—117. Trajan, emperor of Rome. Under him the empire acquires its greatest territorial extent by his conquests in Dacia, and in the East. His successor, Hadrian, abandons the provinces beyond the Euphrates, which Trajan had conquered.

138—180. Era of the Antonines.

167—176. A long and desperate war between Rome, and a great confederacy of the German nations. Marcus Antoninus at last succeeds in repelling them.

192—197. Civil wars throughout the Roman world. Severus becomes emperor. He relaxes the discipline of the soldiers. After his death in 211, the series of military insurrections, civil wars, and murders of emperors recommences.

226. Artaxerxes (Ardisheer) overthrows the Parthian, and restores the Persian kingdom in Asia. He attacks the Roman possessions in the East.

250. The Goths invade the Roman provinces. The emperor Decius is defeated and slain by them.

253—260. The Franks and Alemanni invade Gaul, Spain, and Africa. The Goths attack Asia Minor and Greece. The Persians conquer Armenia. Their king, Sapor, defeats the Roman

## ARMINIUS'S VICTORY OVER VARUS. 255

Emperor Valerian, and takes him prisoner. General distress of the Roman empire.

268—283. The Emperors Claudius, Aurelian, Tacitus, Probus, and Carus defeat the various enemies of Rome, and restore order in the Roman state.

285. Diocletian divides and reorganizes the Roman Empire. After his abdication in 305 a fresh series of civil wars and confusion ensues. Constantine, the first Christian emperor, reunites the empire in 324.

330. Constantine makes Constantinople the seat of empire instead of Rome.

363. The Emperor Julian is killed in action against the Persians.

364—375. The empire is again divided, Valentinian being emperor of the West, and Valens of the East. Valentinian repulses the Alemanni, and other German invaders from Gaul. Splendour of the Gothic kingdom under Hermanric, north of the Danube.

375—395. The Huns attack the Goths, who implore the protection of the Roman emperor of the East. The Goths are allowed to pass the Danube, and to settle in the Roman provinces. A war soon breaks out between them and the Romans, and the emperor Valens and his army are destroyed by them. They ravage the Roman terri-

tories. The Emperor Theodosius reduces them to submission. They retain settlements in Thracia and Asia Minor.

395. Final division of the Roman empire between Arcadius and Honorius, the two sons of Theodosius. The Goths revolt, and under Alaric attack various parts of both the Roman empires.

410. Alaric takes the city of Rome.

412. The Goths march into Gaul, and in 417 into Spain, which had been invaded by hosts of Vandals, Suevi, Alani, and other Germanic nations. Britain is formally abandoned by the Roman empire of the West.

428. Genseric, king of the Vandals, conquers the Roman province of North Africa.

441. The Huns attack the Eastern empire.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE BATTLE OF CHALONS, A.D. 451.

The discomfiture of the mighty attempt of Attila to found a new Anti-Christian dynasty upon the wreck of the temporal power of Rome, at the end of the term of twelve hundred years, to which its duration had been limited by the forebodings of the heathen.—HERBERT.

A BROAD expanse of plains, the *Campi Catalaunici* of the ancients, spreads far and wide around the city of Châlons, in the north-east of France. The long rows of poplars, through which the river Marne winds its way, and a few thinly-scattered villages, are almost the only objects that vary the monotonous aspect of the greater part of this region. But about five miles from Châlons, near the little hamlets of Chape and Cuperly, the ground is indented and heaped up in ranges of grassy mounds and trenches, which attest the work of man's hands in ages past; and which, to the practised eye, demonstrate that this quiet spot has once been the fortified position of a huge military host.



Local tradition gives to these ancient earth works the name of Attila's Camp. Nor is there any reason to question the correctness of the title or to doubt that behind these very ramparts it was that 1400 years ago the most powerful Heathen king that ever ruled in Europe, mustered the remnants of his vast army, which had striven on these plains against the Christian soldiery of Thoulouse and Rome. Here it was that Attila prepared to resist to the death his victors in the field ; and here he heaped up the treasures of his camp in one vast pile, which was to be his funeral pyre should his camp be stormed. It was here that the Gothic and Italian forces watched, but dared not assail their enemy in his despair, after that great and terrible day of battle, when

“ The sound

Of conflict was o'erpast, the shout of all  
Whom earth could send from her remotest bounds,  
Heathen or faithful ; from thy hundred mouths,  
That feed the Caspian with Riphean snows,  
Huge Volga ! from famed Hypanis, which once  
Cradled the Hun ; from all the countless realms  
Between Imaus and that utmost strand  
Where columns of Herculean rock confront  
The blown Atlantic ; Roman, Goth, and Hun,  
And Scythian strength of chivalry, that tread  
The cold Codanian shore, or what far lands  
Inhospitable drink Cimmerian floods,  
Franks, Saxons, Suevic, and Sarmatian chiefs,

And who from green Armorica or Spain  
Flocked to the work of death." \*

The victory which the Roman general, Aetius, with his Gothic allies, had then gained over the Huns, was the last victory of Imperial Rome. But among the long Fasti of her triumphs, few can be found that, for their importance and ultimate benefit to mankind, are comparable with this expiring effort of her arms. It did not, indeed, open to her any new career of conquest,—it did not consolidate the relics of her power,—it did not turn the rapid ebb of her fortunes. The mission of Imperial Rome was, in truth, already accomplished. She had received and transmitted through her once ample dominion the civilization of Greece. She had broken up the barriers of narrow nationalities among the various states and tribes that dwelt around the coasts of the Mediterranean. She had fused these and many other races into one organized empire, bound together by a community of laws, of government, and institutions. Under the shelter of her full power the True Faith had arisen in the earth, and during the years of her decline it had been nourished to maturity, it had overspread all the provinces that ever obeyed her sway.† For no beneficial purpose to mankind could the dominion

\* Herbert's "Attila," book i. line 13.

† See the Introduction to Ranke's "History of the Popes."

of the seven-hilled city have been restored or prolonged. But it was all-important to mankind what nations should divide among them Rome's rich inheritance of empire. Whether the Germanic and Gothic warriors should form states and kingdoms out of the fragments of her dominions and become the free members of the commonwealth of Christian Europe; or whether pagan savages, from the wilds of Central Asia, should crush the relics of classic civilization and the early institutions of the christianized Germans in one hopeless chaos of barbaric conquest. The Christian Visigoths of king Theodoric fought and triumphed at Châlons, side by side with the legions of Aetius. Their joint victory over the Hunnish host not only rescued for a time from destruction the old age of Rome, but preserved for centuries of power and glory the Germanic element in the civilization of modern Europe.

In order to estimate the full importance to mankind of the battle of Châlons, we must keep steadily in mind who and what the Germans were and the important distinctions between them and the numerous other races that assailed the Roman Empire: and it is to be understood that the Gothic and Scandinavian nations are included in the German race. Now, "in two remarkable traits the Germans differed from the Sarmatic, as well as

from the Slavic nations, and, indeed, from all those other races to whom the Greeks and Romans gave the designation of barbarians. I allude to their personal freedom and regard for the rights of men ; secondly, to the respect paid by them to the female sex, and the chastity for which the latter were celebrated among the people of the North. These were the foundations of that probity of character, self-respect, and purity of manners which may be traced among the Germans and Goths even during pagan times, and which, when their sentiments were enlightened by Christianity, brought out those splendid traits of character which distinguish the age of chivalry and romance.”\* What the intermixture of the German stock with the classic, at the fall of the Western Empire, has done for mankind, may be best felt by watching, with Arnold, over how large a portion of the earth the influence of the German element is now extended.

“It affects, more or less, the whole west of Europe, from the head of the Gulf of Bothnia to the most southern promontory of Sicily, from the Oder and the Adriatic to the Hebrides and to Lisbon. It is true that the language spoken over a large portion of this space is not predominantly

\* See Prichard's "Researches into the Physical History of Man," vol. iii. p. 423.

German; but even in France and Italy and Spain, the influence of the Franks, Burgundians, Visigoths, Ostrogoths, and Lombards, while it has coloured even the language, has in blood and institutions left its mark legibly and indelibly. Germany, the Low Countries, Switzerland for the most part, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, and our own islands, are all in language, in blood, and in institutions, German most decidedly. But all South America is peopled with Spaniards and Portuguese; all North America, and all Australia, with Englishmen. I say nothing of the prospects and influence of the German race in Africa and in India: it is enough to say that half of Europe, and all America and Australia, are German, more or less completely, in race, in language, or in institutions, or in all."\*

By the middle of the fifth century, Germanic nations had settled themselves in many of the fairest regions of the Roman Empire, had imposed their yoke on the provincials, and had undergone, to a considerable extent, that moral conquest which the arts and refinements of the vanquished in arms have so often achieved over the rough victor. The Visigoths held the north of Spain, and Gaul south of the Loire. Franks, Allemanni, Alans, and Burgundians, had established themselves in other

\* Arnold's "Lectures on Modern History," p. 35.

Gallic provinces, and the Suevi were masters of a large southern portion of the Spanish peninsula. A king of the Vandals reigned in North Africa. And the Ostrogoths had firmly planted themselves in the provinces north of Italy. Of these powers and principalities, that of the Visigoths, under their king Theodoric, son of Alaric, was by far the first in power and in civilization.

The pressure of the Huns upon Europe had first been felt in the fourth century of our era. They had long been formidable to the Chinese Empire, but the ascendancy in arms which another nomadic tribe of Central Asia, the Sienpi, gained over them, drove the Huns from their Chinese conquest westward; and this movement once being communicated to the whole chain of barbaric nations that dwelt northward of the Black Sea and the Roman Empire; tribe after tribe of savage warriors broke in upon the barriers of civilized Europe, "*Velut unda supervenit undam.*" The Huns crossed the Tanais into Europe in 375, and rapidly reduced to subjection the Alans,\* the Ostrogoths, and other tribes that were then dwelling along the course of the Danube. The armies of the Roman emperor that tried to check their progress, were cut to pieces by them, and Pannonia and other provinces south of the Danube were speedily occupied by the victorious cavalry of

these new invaders. Not merely the degenerate Romans, but the bold and hardy warriors of Germany and Scandinavia were appalled at the numbers, the ferocity, the ghastly appearance, and the lightning-like rapidity of the Huns. Strange and loathsome legends were coined and credited, which attributed their origin to the union of

“ Secret, black, and midnight hags,”

with the evil spirits of the wilderness.

Tribe after tribe, and city after city fell before them. Then came a pause in their career of conquest in south-western Europe, caused probably by dissensions among their chiefs, and also by their arms being employed in attacks upon the Scandinavian nations. But when Attila (or Atzel, as he is called in the Hungarian language) became their ruler, the torrent of their arms was directed with augmented terrors upon the west and the south; and their myriads marched beneath the guidance of one master-mind to the overthrow both of the new and the old powers of the earth.

Recent events have thrown such a strong interest over every thing connected with the Hungarian name, that even the terrible renown of Attila now impresses us the more vividly through our sympathizing admiration of the exploits of those who claim to be descended from his warriors, and “ambitiously insert the name of Attila among

their native kings." The authenticity of this martial genealogy is denied by some writers and questioned by more. But it is at least certain that the Magyars of Arpad, who are the immediate ancestors of the bulk of the modern Hungarians, and who conquered the country which bears the name of Hungary in A.D. 889, were of the same stock of mankind as were the Huns of Attila, even if they did not belong to the same subdivision of that stock. Nor is there any improbability in the tradition that after Attila's death many of his warriors remained in Hungary, and that their descendants afterwards joined the Huns of Arpad in their career of conquest. It is certain that Attila made Hungary the seat of his empire. It seems also susceptible of clear proof that the territory was then called Hungvar and Attila's soldiers Hungvari. Both the Huns of Attila and those of Arpad came from the family of nomadic nations, whose primitive regions were those vast wildernesses of High Asia, which are included between the Altaic and the Himalayan mountain-chains. The inroads of these tribes upon the lower regions of Asia, and into Europe, have caused many of the most remarkable revolutions in the history of the world. There is every reason to believe that swarms of these nations made their way into distant parts of the earth, at periods long before the date of the



Scythian invasion of Asia, which is the earliest inroad of the nomadic race that history records. The first, as far as we can conjecture, in respect to the time of their descent, were the Finnish and Ugrian tribes, who appear to have come down from the Altaic border of High Asia towards the north-west, in which direction they advanced to the Uralian mountains. There they established themselves; and that mountain-chain, with its valleys and pasture-lands, became to them a new country whence they sent out colonies on every side; but the Ugrian colony, which, under Arpad, occupied Hungary, and became the ancestors of the bulk of the present Hungarian nation, did not quit their settlements on the Uralian mountains till a very late period, and not until four centuries after the time, when Attila led from the primary seats of the nomadic races in High Asia the host, with which he advanced into the heart of France.\* That host was Turkish: but closely allied in origin, language, and habits with the Finno-Ugrian settlers on the Ural.

Attila's fame has not come down to us through the partial and suspicious medium of chroniclers and poets of his own race. It is not from Hunnish authorities that we learn the extent of his might

\* See Prichard's "Researches into the Physical History of Mankind."

it is from his enemies, from the literature and the legends of the nations whom he afflicted with his arms, that we draw the unquestionable evidence of his greatness. Besides the express narratives of Byzantine, Latin, and Gothic writers, we have the strongest proof of the stern reality of Attila's conquests, in the extent to which he and his Huns have been the themes of the earliest German and Scandinavian lays. Wild as many of those legends are, they bear concurrent and certain testimony to the awe, with which the memory of Attila was regarded by the bold warriors who composed and delighted in them. Attila's exploits, and the wonders of his unearthly steed and magic sword, repeatedly occur in the Sagas of Norway and Iceland; and the celebrated *Nibelungen Lied*, the most ancient of Germanic poetry, is full of them. There, *Etsel*, or Attila, is described as the wearer of twelve mighty crowns, and as promising to his bride the lands of thirty kings, whom his irresistible sword had subdued. He is, in fact, the hero of the latter part of this remarkable poem; and it is at his capital city, *Etselenburgh*, which evidently corresponds to the modern Buda, that much of its action takes place.

When we turn from the legendary to the historic Attila, we see clearly that he was not one of the vulgar herd of barbaric conquerors. Consum-

mate military skill may be traced in his campaigns; and he relied far less on the brute force of armies for the aggrandizement of his empire, than on the unbounded influence over the affections of friends and the fears of foes, which his genius enabled him to acquire. Austerely sober in his private life,—severely just on the judgment-seat,—conspicuous among a nation of warriors for hardihood, strength, and skill in every martial exercise,—grave and deliberate in counsel, but rapid and remorseless in execution,—he gave safety and security to all who were under his dominion, while he waged a warfare of extermination against all who opposed or sought to escape from it. He watched the national passions, the prejudices, the creeds, and the superstitions of the varied nations over which he ruled, and of those which he sought to reduce beneath his sway: all these feelings he had the skill to turn to his own account. His own warriors believed him to be the inspired favourite of their deities, and followed him with fanatic zeal: his enemies looked on him as the pre-appointed minister of heaven's wrath against themselves; and though they believed not in his creed, their own made them tremble before him.

In one of his early campaigns he appeared before his troops with an ancient iron sword in his

grasp, which he told them was the god of war whom their ancestors had worshipped. It is certain that the nomadic tribes of Northern Asia, whom Herodotus described under the name of Scythians, from the earliest times worshipped as their god a bare sword. That sword-god was supposed, in Attila's time, to have disappeared from earth; but the Hunnish king now claimed to have received it by special revelation. It was said that a herdsman, who was tracking in the desert a wounded heifer by the drops of blood, found the mysterious sword standing fixed in the ground, as if it had darted down from heaven. The herdsman bore it to Attila, who thenceforth was believed by the Huns to wield the Spirit of Death in battle; and their seers prophesied that that sword was to destroy the world. A Roman,\* who was on an embassy to the Hunnish camp, recorded in his memoirs Attila's acquisition of this supernatural weapon, and the immense influence over the minds of the barbaric tribes which its possession gave him. In the title which he assumed we shall see the skill with which he availed himself of the legends and creeds of other nations as well as of his own. He designated himself "ATTILA Descendant of the Great Nimrod. Nurtured in Engaddi. By the Grace of God, King of the

\* Priscus apud Jornandem.

Huns, the Goths, the Danes, and the Medes.  
The Dread of the World."

Herbert states that Attila is represented on an old medallion with a Teraphim, or a head, on his breast; and the same writer adds: "We know, from the 'Hamartigenea' of Prudentius, that Nimrod, with a snaky-haired head, was the object of adoration of the heretical followers of Marcion; and the same head was the palladium set up by Antiochus Epiphanes over the gates of Antioch, though it has been called the visage of Charon. The memory of Nimrod was certainly regarded with mystic veneration by many; and by asserting himself to be the heir of that mighty hunter before the Lord, he vindicated to himself at least the whole Babylonian kingdom.

"The singular assertion in his style, that he was nurtured in Engaddi, where he certainly had never been, will be more easily understood on reference to the twelfth chapter of the Book of Revelations, concerning the woman clothed with the sun, who was to bring forth in the wilderness — 'where she hath a place prepared of God' — a man-child, who was to contend with the dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and rule all nations with a rod of iron. This prophecy was at that time understood universally by the sincere Christians to refer to the birth of Constantine, who

was to overwhelm the paganism of the city on the seven hills, and it is still so explained; but it is evident that the heathens must have looked on it in a different light, and have regarded it as a foretelling of the birth of that Great One who should master the temporal power of Rome. The assertion, therefore, that he was nurtured in Engaddi, is a claim to be looked upon as that man-child who was to be brought forth in a place prepared of God in the wilderness. Engaddi means a place of palms and vines in the desert; it was hard by Zoar, the city of refuge, which was saved in the vale of Siddim, or Demons, when the rest were destroyed by fire and brimstone from the Lord in heaven, and might, therefore, be especially called a place prepared of God in the wilderness."

It is obvious enough why he styled himself "By the Grace of God, King of the Huns and Goths;" and it seems far from difficult to see why he added the names of the Medes and the Danes. His armies had been engaged in warfare against the Persian kingdom of the Sassanidæ, and it is certain\* that he meditated the invasion and overthrow of the Medo-Persian power. Probably some of the northern provinces of that kingdom had been compelled to pay him tribute; and this

\* See the narrative of Priscus.

would account for his styling himself King of the Medes, they being his remotest subjects to the south. From a similar cause he may have called himself King of the Danes, as his power may well have extended northwards as far as the nearest of the Scandinavian nations; and this mention of Medes and Danes as his subjects, would serve at once to indicate the vast extent of his dominion.\*

The immense territory north of the Danube and Black Sea, and eastward of Caucasus, over which Attila ruled, first in conjunction with his brother Bleda, and afterwards alone, cannot be very accurately defined, but it must have comprised within it, besides the Huns, many nations of Slavic, Gothic, Teutonic, and Finnish origin. South also of the Danube, the country, from the river Sau as far as Novi in Thrace, was a Hunnish province. Such was the empire of the Huns in A.D. 445; a memorable year, in which Attila founded Buda on the Danube, as his capital city; and rided himself of his brother by a crime which seems to have been prompted not only by selfish ambition, but

\* In the "Nibelungen-Lied," the old poet who describes the reception of the heroine Chrimhild by Attila [Etsel], says that Attila's dominions were so vast, that among his subject-warriors there were Russian, Greek, Wallachian, Polish, *and even Danish knights.*

also by a desire of turning to his purpose the legends and forebodings which then were universally spread throughout the Roman Empire, and must have been well known to the watchful and ruthless Hun.

The year 445 of our era completed the twelfth century from the foundation of Rome, according to the best chronologers. It had always been believed among the Romans that the twelve vultures, which were said to have appeared to Romulus when he founded the city, signified the time during which the Roman power should endure. The twelve vultures denoted twelve centuries. This interpretation of the vision of the birds of destiny was current among learned Romans, even when there were yet many of the twelve centuries to run, and while the imperial city was at the zenith of its power. But as the allotted time drew nearer and nearer to its conclusion, and as Rome grew weaker and weaker beneath the blows of barbaric invaders, the terrible omen was more and more talked and thought of; and in Attila's time, men watched for the momentary extinction of the Roman State with the last beat of the last vulture's wing. Moreover, among the numerous legends connected with the foundation of the city, and the fratricidal death of Remus, there was one most terrible one, which told that Romulus did



not put his brother to death in accident, or in hasty quarrel, but that

"He slew his gallant twin  
With inexpressible sin,"

deliberately, and in compliance with the warnings of supernatural powers. The shedding of a brother's blood was believed to have been the price, at which the founder of Rome had purchased from destiny her twelve centuries of existence.\*

We may imagine, therefore, with what terror in this, the twelve-hundredth year after the foundation of Rome, the inhabitants of the Roman Empire must have heard the tidings, that the royal brethren, Attila and Bleda, had founded a new capitol on the Danube, which was designed to rule over the ancient capitol on the Tiber; and that Attila, like Romulus, had consecrated the foundations of his new city by murdering his brother; so that for the new cycle of centuries then about to commence, dominion had been bought from the gloomy spirits of destiny in favour of the Hun, by a sacrifice of equal awe and value with that which had formerly obtained it for the Roman.

\* See a curious justification of Attila for murdering his brother, by a zealous Hungarian advocate, in the note to Pray's "*Annales Hunnorum*," p. 117. The example of Romulus is the main authority quoted.

It is to be remembered, that not only the pagans, but also the Christians of that age, knew and believed in these legends and omens, however they might differ as to the nature of the super-human agency by which such mysteries had been made known to mankind. And we may observe, with Herbert, a modern learned dignitary of our church, how remarkably this augury was fulfilled. For, "if to the twelve centuries, denoted by the twelve vultures that appeared to Romulus, we add for the six birds that appeared to Remus six lustra, or periods of five years each, by which the Romans were wont to number their time, it brings us precisely to the year 476, in which the Roman Empire was finally extinguished by Odoacer."

An attempt to assassinate Attila, made, or supposed to have been made, at the instigation of Theodoric the younger, the Emperor of Constantinople, drew the Hunnish armies, in 445, upon the Eastern Empire, and delayed for a time the destined blow against Rome. Probably a more important cause of delay was the revolt of some of the Hunnish tribes to the north of the Black Sea against Attila, which broke out about this period, and is cursorily mentioned by the Byzantine writers. Attila quelled this revolt, and having thus consolidated his power, and having punished

the presumption of the Eastern Roman Emperor by fearful ravages of his fairest provinces, Attila, in 450 A.D., prepared to set his vast forces in motion for the conquest of Western Europe. He sought unsuccessfully by diplomatic intrigues to detach the king of the Visigoths from his alliance with Rome, and he resolved first to crush the power of Theodoric, and then to advance with overwhelming power to trample out the last sparks of the doomed Roman Empire.

A strange invitation from a Roman princess, gave him a pretext for the war, and threw an air of chivalric enterprise over his invasion. Honoria, sister of Valentinian III., the Emperor of the West, had sent to Attila to offer him her hand and her supposed right to share in the imperial power. This had been discovered by the Romans, and Honoria had been forthwith closely imprisoned. Attila now pretended to take up arms in behalf of his self-promised bride, and proclaimed that he was about to march to Rome to redress Honoria's wrongs. Ambition and spite against her brother must have been the sole motives that led the lady to woo the royal Hun ; for Attila's face and person had all the natural ugliness of his race, and the description given of him by a Byzantine ambassador, must have been well known in the imperial courts. Herbert has well versified the portrait

drawn by Priscus of the great enemy of both  
Byzantium and Rome :—

“ Terrific was his semblance, in no mould .  
Of beautiful proportion cast ; his limbs  
Nothing exalted, but with sinews braced  
Of Chalybeean temper, agile, lithe,  
And swifter than the roe ; his ample chest  
Was over-brow'd by a gigantic head,  
With eyes keen, deeply sunk, and small, that gleam'd  
Strangely in wrath as though some spirit unclean  
Within that corporal tenement install'd  
Look'd from its windows, but with temper'd fire  
Beam'd mildly on the unresisting. Thin  
His beard and hoary ; his flat nostrils crown'd  
A cicatrized, swart visage,—but withal  
That questionable shape such glory wore  
That mortals quail'd beneath him.”

Two chiefs of the Franks, who were then settled  
on the Lower Rhine, were at this period engaged  
in a feud with each other ; and while one of them  
appealed to the Romans for aid, the other invoked  
the assistance and protection of the Huns. Attila  
thus obtained an ally, whose co-operation secured  
for him the passage of the Rhine ; and it was this  
circumstance which caused him to take a north-  
ward route from Hungary for his attack upon  
Gaul. The muster of the Hunnish hosts was  
swollen by warriors of every tribe that they had  
subjugated ; nor is there any reason to suspect the  
old chroniclers of wilful exaggeration in estimating

Attila's army at seven hundred thousand strong. Having crossed the Rhine, probably a little below Coblentz, he defeated the king of the Burgundians, who endeavoured to bar his progress. He then divided his vast forces into two armies,—one of which marched north-west upon Tongres and Arras, and the other cities of that part of France ; while the main body, under Attila himself, marched up the Moselle, and destroyed Besançon, and other towns in the country of the Burgundians. One of the latest and best biographers of Attila\* well observes, that “having thus conquered the eastern part of France, Attila prepared for an invasion of the West Gothic territories beyond the Loire. He marched upon Orleans where he intended to force the passage of that river, and only a little attention is requisite to enable us to perceive that he proceeded on a systematic plan : he had his right wing on the north for the protection of his Frank allies ; his left wing on the south for the purpose of preventing the Burgundians from rallying, and of menacing the passes of the Alps from Italy ; and he led his centre towards the chief object of the campaign—the conquest of Orleans, and an easy passage into the West Gothic dominion. The whole plan is very like that of

\* Biographical Dictionary commenced by the Useful Knowledge Society in 1844.

the allied powers in 1814, with this difference, that their left wing entered France through the defiles of the Jura, in the direction of Lyons, and that the military object of the campaign was the capture of Paris."

It was not until the year 451 that the Huns commenced the siege of Orleans; and during their campaign in Eastern Gaul the Roman general Aetius had strenuously exerted himself in collecting and organising such an army as might, when united to the soldiery of the Visigoths, be fit to face the Huns in the field. He enlisted every subject of the Roman Empire, whom patriotism, courage, or compulsion could collect beneath the standards; and round these troops, which assumed the once proud title of the legions of Rome, he arrayed the large forces of barbaric auxiliaries, whom pay, persuasion, or the general hate and dread of the Huns, brought to the camp of the last of the Roman generals. King Theodoric exerted himself with equal energy. Orleans resisted her besiegers bravely as in after times. The passage of the Loire was skilfully defended against the Huns; and Aetius and Theodoric after much manœuvring and difficulty, effected a junction of their armies to the south of that important river.

On the advance of the allies upon Orleans, Attila instantly broke up the siege of that city,

and retreated towards the Marne. He did not choose to risk a decisive battle with only the central corps of his army against the combined power of his enemies; and he therefore fell back upon his base of operations; calling in his wings from Arras and Besançon, and concentrating the whole of the Hunnish forces on the vast plains of Chalons-sur-Marne. A glance at the map will show how scientifically this place was chosen by the Hunnish general, as the point for his scattered forces to converge upon; and the nature of the ground was eminently favourable for the operations of cavalry, the arm in which Attila's strength peculiarly lay.

It was during the retreat from Orleans that a Christian hermit is reported to have approached the Hunnish king, and said to him, "Thou art the Scourge of God for the chastisement of the Christians." Attila instantly assumed this new title of terror, which thenceforth became the appellation, by which he was most widely and most fearfully known.

The confederate armies of Romans and Visigoths at last met their great adversary, face to face, on the ample battle-ground of the Châlons plains. Aetius commanded on the right of the allies; King Theodoric on the left; and Sangipan, King of the Alans, whose fidelity was suspected, was placed purposely in the centre, and in the

very front of the battle. Attila commanded his centre in person, at the head of his own countrymen, while the Ostrogoths, the Gepidæ, and the other subject allies of the Huns, were drawn up on the wings. Some manœuvring appears to have occurred before the engagement, in which Aetius had the advantage, inasmuch as he succeeded in occupying a sloping hill, which commanded the left flank of the Huns. Attila saw the importance of the position taken by Aetius on the high ground and commenced the battle by a furious attack on this part of the Roman line, in which he seems to have detached some of his best troops from his centre to aid his left. The Romans, having the advantage of the ground, repulsed the Huns, and while the allies gained this advantage on their right, their left, under King Theodoric, assailed the Ostrogoths, who formed the right of Attila's army. The gallant king was himself struck down by a javelin, as he rode onward at the head of his men, and his own cavalry charging over him trampled him to death in the confusion. But the Visigoths, infuriated, not dispirited, by their monarch's fall, routed the enemies opposed to them, and then wheeled upon the flank of the Hunnish centre, which had been engaged in a sanguinary and indecisive contest with the Alans.

In this peril Attila made his centre fall back



upon his camp; and when the shelter of its intrenchments and waggons had once been gained, the Hunnish archers repulsed, without difficulty, the charges of the vengeful Gothic cavalry. Aetius had not pressed the advantage which he gained on his side of the field, and when night fell over the wild scene of havoc, Attila's left was still undefeated but his right had been routed, and his centre forced back upon his camp.

Expecting an assault on the morrow, Attila stationed his best archers in front of the cars and waggons, which were drawn up as a fortification along his lines, and made every preparation for a desperate resistance. But the "Scourge of God" resolved that no man should boast of the honour of having either captured or slain him; and he caused to be raised in the centre of his encampment a huge pyramid of the wooden saddles of his cavalry: round it he heaped the spoils and the wealth that he had won; on it he stationed his wives who had accompanied him in the campaign; and on the summit Attila placed himself, ready to perish in the flames, and baulk the victorious foe of their choicest booty, should they succeed in storming his defences.

But when the morning broke and revealed the extent of the carnage, with which the plains were heaped for miles, the successful allies saw also and

respected the resolute attitude of their antagonist. Neither were any measures taken to blockade him in his camp, and so to extort by famine that submission, which it was too plainly perilous to enforce with the sword. Attila was allowed to march back the remnants of his army without molestation, and even with the semblance of success.

It is probable that the crafty Aetius was unwilling to be too victorious. He dreaded the glory which his allies the Visigoths had acquired; and feared that Rome might find a second Alaric in Prince Thorismund, who had signalled himself in the battle, and had been chosen on the field to succeed his father Theodoric. He persuaded the young king to return at once to his capital; and thus relieved himself at the same time of the presence of a dangerous friend, as well as of a formidable though beaten foe.

Attila's attacks on the Western Empire were soon renewed; but never with such peril to the civilized world as had menaced it before his defeat at Châlons. And on his death two years after that battle, the vast empire which his genius had founded, was soon dissevered by the successful revolts of the subject nations. The name of the Huns ceased for some centuries to inspire terror in Western Europe, and their ascendancy passed

away with the life of the great king, by whom  
had been so fearfully augmented.\*

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SYNOPSIS OF EVENTS, BETWEEN THE BATTLE O  
CHALONS, A.D. 451, AND THE BATTLE O  
TOURS, 732.

A.D. 476. The Roman Empire of the West  
extinguished by Odoacer.

481. Establishment of the French monarch  
in Gaul by Clovis.

455—582. The Saxons, Angles, and Frisian  
conquer Britain, except the northern parts and the  
districts along the west coast. The German con-  
querors found eight independent kingdoms.

533—568. The generals of Justinian, the Em-  
peror of Constantinople, conquer Italy and North  
Africa; and these countries are for a short time  
annexed to the Roman Empire of the East.

568—570. The Lombards conquer great part of  
Italy.

\* If I seem to have given fewer of the details of the battle  
itself than its importance would warrant, my excuse must be  
that Gibbon has enriched our language with a description of  
too long for quotation and too splendid for rivalry. I have  
not, however, taken altogether the same view of it that he has.  
The notes to Mr. Herbert's poem of "Attila" bring together  
nearly all the authorities on the subject.

570—627. The wars between the Emperors of Constantinople and the Kings of Persia, are actively continued.

622. The Mahometan era of the Hegira. Mahomet is driven from Mecca, and is received as prince of Medina.

629—632. Mahomet conquers Arabia.

632—651. The Mahometan Arabs invade and conquer Persia.

632—709. They attack the Roman Empire of the East. They conquer Syria, Egypt, and Africa.

709—713. They cross the Straits of Gibraltar, and invade and conquer Spain.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE BATTLE OF TOURS, A.D. 732.

The events that rescued our ancestors of Britain, and our neighbours of Gaul, from the civil and religious yoke of the Koran.—GIBBON.

THE broad tract of champaign country which intervenes between the cities of Poitiers and Tours, is principally composed of a succession of rich pasture-lands, which are traversed and fertilized by the Cher, the Creuse, the Vienne, the Claine, the Indre, and other tributaries of the river Loire. Here and there, the ground swells into picturesque eminences; and occasionally a belt of forest land, a brown heath, or a clustering series of vineyards breaks the monotony of the wide-spread meadows; but the general character of the land is that of a grassy plain, and it seems naturally adapted for the evolutions of numerous armies, especially of those vast bodies of cavalry, which principally decided the fate of nations during the centuries that followed the downfall

of Rome, and preceded the consolidation of the modern European powers.

This region has been signalized by more than one memorable conflict ; but it is principally interesting to the historian, by having been the scene of the great victory won by Charles Martel over the Saracens, A.D. 732, which gave a decisive check to the career of Arab conquest in Western Europe, rescued Christendom from Islam, preserved the relics of ancient and the germs of modern civilization, and re-established the old superiority of the Indo-European over the Semitic family of mankind.

Sismondi and Michelet have underrated the enduring interest of this great Appeal of Battle between the champions of the Crescent and the Cross. But, if French writers have slighted the exploits of their national hero, the Saracenic trophies of Charles Martel have had full justice done to them by English and German historians. Gibbon devotes several pages of his great work\* to the narrative of the battle of Tours, and to the consideration of the consequences which probably

\* Vol. vii. p. 17, *et seq.* Gibbon's sneering remark, that if the Saracen conquests had not then been checked, "Perhaps the interpretation of the Koran would now be taught in the schools of Oxford, and her pulpits might demonstrate to a circumcised people the sanctity and truth of the revelation of Mahomet," has almost an air of regret.

would have resulted if Abderrahman's enterprise had not been crushed by the Frankish chief. Schlegel\* speaks of this "mighty victory" in terms of fervent gratitude; and tells how "the arm of Charles Martel saved and delivered the Christian nations of the West from the deadly grasp of all-destroying Islam;" and Ranke† points out as "one of the most important epochs in the history of the world, the commencement of the eighth century; when on the one side Mahomedanism threatened to overspread Italy and Gaul, and on the other the ancient idolatry of Saxony and Friesland once more forced its way across the Rhine. In this peril of Christian institutions, a youthful prince of Germanic race, Karl Martell, arose as their champion; maintained them with all the energy which the necessity for self-defence calls forth, and finally extended them into new regions."

Arnold‡ ranks the victory of Charles Martel even higher than the victory of Arminius, "among those signal deliverances which have affected for centuries the happiness of mankind." In fact the

\* "Philosophy of History," p. 331.

† "History of the Reformation in Germany," vol. i. p. 5.

‡ "History of the later Roman Commonwealth," vol. ii. p. 317.

more we test its importance, the higher we shall be led to estimate it; and, though all authentic details which we possess of its circumstances and its heroes are but meagre, we can trace enough of its general character to make us watch with deep interest this encounter between the rival conquerors of the decaying Roman empire. That old classic world, the history of which occupies so large a portion of our early studies, lay, in the eighth century of our era, utterly exanimate and overthrown. On the north the German, on the south the Arab was rending away its provinces. At last the spoilers encountered one another, each striving for the full mastery of the prey. Their conflict brought back upon the memory of Gibbon the old Homeric simile, where the strife of Hector and Patroclus over the dead body of Cebriones is compared to the combat of two lions, that in their hate and hunger fight together on the mountain-tops over the carcase of a slaughtered stag: and the reluctant yielding of the Saracen power to the superior might of the Northern warriors, might not inaptly recall those other lines of the same book of the Iliad, where the downfall of Patroclus beneath Hector is likened to the forced yielding of the panting and exhausted wild-boar, that had long and furiously fought with a superior beast of prey, for the possession of the scanty fountain



among the rocks, at which each burned to drink.\*

Although three centuries had passed away since the Germanic conquerors of Rome had crossed the Rhine, never to repass that frontier stream, no settled system of institutions or government, no amalgamation of the various races into one people, no uniformity of language or habits had been established in the country at the time when Charles Martel was called on to repel the menacing tide of Saracenic invasion from the south. Gaul was not yet France. In that, as in other provinces of the Roman empire of the West, the dominion of the Cæsars had been shattered as early as the fifth century, and barbaric kingdoms and principalities had promptly arisen on the ruins of the Roman power. But few of these had any permanency, and none of them consolidated the rest, or any considerable number of the rest, into one coherent and organized civil and political society. The

\* Λέονθ' ὥς, δηνυθήτην,

᾿Ωτ' ὄρεος κορυφῇσι περὶ κταμένης ἐλάφοιο,

᾿Αμφω πεινῶντε, μέγα φρονέοντε μάχεσθον.

Il. π'. 756.

᾿Ως δ' ὅτε σὺν ἀκάμαντα λέων ἐζήσατο χάρμη,

Τῷ τ' ὄρεος κορυφῇσι μέγα φρονέοντε μάχεσθον,

Πίδακος ἄμφ' ὀλίγης· ἐθέλουσί δὲ πείμεν ἄμφω·

Πολλὰ δέ τ' ἀσθμαίνοντα λέων ἐδάμασσε βιῆφιν.

Il. π'. 823.

great bulk of the population still consisted of the conquered provincials, that is to say, of Romanised Celts, of a Gallic race which had long been under the dominion of the Cæsars, and had acquired, together with no slight infusion of Roman blood, the language, the literature, the laws, and the civilization of Latium. Among these, and dominant over them, roved or dwelt the German victors: some retaining nearly all the rude independence of their primitive national character; others, softened and disciplined by the aspect and contact of the manners and institutions of civilized life. For it is to be borne in mind, that the Roman empire in the west was not crushed by any sudden avalanche or barbaric invasion. The German conquerors came across the Rhine not in enormous hosts, but in bands of a few thousand warriors at a time. The conquest of a province was the result of an infinite series of partial local invasions, carried on by little armies of this description. The victorious warriors either retired with their booty; or fixed themselves in the invaded district, taking care to keep sufficiently concentrated for military purposes, and ever ready for some fresh foray, either against a rival Teutonic band or some hitherto unassailed city of the provincials. Gradually, however, the conquerors acquired a desire for permanent landed possessions. They lost somewhat of the restless

thirst for novelty and adventure which had first made them throng beneath the banner of the boldest captains of their tribe, and leave their native forests for a roving military life on the left bank of the Rhine. They were converted to the Christian faith, and gave up with their old creed much of the coarse ferocity which must have been fostered in the spirits of the ancient warriors of the north by a mythology, which promised, as the reward of the brave on earth, an eternal cycle of fighting and drunkenness in heaven.

But, although their conversion and other civilizing influences operated powerfully upon the Germans in Gaul; and although the Franks (who were originally a confederation of the Teutonic tribes that dwelt between the Rhine, the Maine, and the Weser) established a decisive superiority over the other conquerors of the province, as well as over the conquered provincials, the country long remained a chaos of uncombined and shifting elements. The early princes of the Merovingian dynasty were generally occupied in wars against other princes of their house, occasioned by the frequent subdivisions of the Frank monarchy; and the ablest and best of them had found all their energies tasked to the utmost to defend the barrier of the Rhine against the pagan Germans who

strove to pass that river and gather their share of the spoils of the empire.

The conquests which the Saracens effected over the southern and eastern provinces of Rome were far more rapid than those achieved by the Germans in the north; and the new organizations of society which the Moslems introduced were summarily and uniformly enforced. Exactly a century passed between the death of Mohammed and the date of the battle of Tours. During that century the followers of the Prophet had torn away half the Roman empire; and besides their conquests over Persia, the Saracens had overrun Syria, Egypt, Africa, and Spain, in an unchequered and apparently irresistible career of victory. Nor, at the commencement of the eighth century of our era, was the Mohammedan world divided against itself, as it subsequently became. All these vast regions obeyed the Caliph; throughout them all, from the Pyrenees to the Oxus, the name of Mohammed was invoked in prayer, and the Koran revered as the book of the law.

It was under one of their ablest and most renowned commanders, with a veteran army, and with every apparent advantage of time, place, and circumstance, that the Arabs made their great effort at the conquest of Europe north of the

Pyrenees. The victorious Moslem soldiery in Spain,

“ A countless multitude ;  
 Syrian, Moor, Saracen, Greek renegade,  
 Persian, and Copt, and Tartar, in one bond  
 Of erring faith conjoined—strong in the youth  
 And heat of zeal—a dreadful brotherhood,”

were eager for the plunder of more Christian cities and shrines, and full of fanatic confidence in the invincibility of their arms.

Nor were the chiefs  
 Of victory less assured, by long success  
 Elate, and proud of that o'erwhelming strength  
 Which, surely they believed, as it had rolled  
 Thus far uncheck'd, would roll victorious on,  
 Till, like the Orient, the subjected West  
 Should bow in reverence at Mahommed's name ;  
 And pilgrims from remotest Arctic shores  
 Tread with religious feet the burning sands  
 Of Araby and Mecca's stony soil.

SOUTHEY'S *Roderick*.

It is not only by the modern Christian poet, but by the old Arabian chroniclers also, that these feelings of ambition and arrogance are attributed to the Moslems who had overthrown the Visigoth power in Spain. And their eager expectations of new wars were excited to the utmost on the re-appointment by the caliph of Abderrahman Ibn Abdillah Alghafeki, to the government of that country, A.D. 729, which restored them a general

who had signalized his skill and prowess during the conquests of Africa and Spain, whose ready valour and generosity had made him the idol of the troops, who had already been engaged in several expeditions into Gaul, so as to be well acquainted with the national character and tactics of the Franks, and who was known to thirst, like a good Moslem, for revenge for the slaughter of some detachments of the True Believers, which had been cut off on the north of the Pyrenees.

In addition to his cardinal military virtues, Abderrahman is described by the Arab writers as a model of integrity and justice. The first two years of his second administration in Spain were occupied in severe reforms of the abuses which under his predecessors had crept into the system of government, and in extensive preparations for his intended conquest in Gaul. Besides the troops which he collected from his province, he obtained from Africa a large body of chosen Berber cavalry, officered by Arabs of proved skill and valour: and in the summer of 732, he crossed the Pyrenees at the head of an army which some Arab writers rate at eighty thousand strong, while some of the Christian chroniclers swell its numbers to many hundreds of thousands more. Probably the Arab account diminishes, but of the two keeps nearer to the truth. It was from this formidable host,

after Eudes, the Count of Aquitaine, had vainly striven to check it, after many strong cities had fallen before it, and half the land been overrun, that Gaul and Christendom were at last rescued by the strong arm of Prince Charles, who acquired a surname,\* like that of the war-god of his forefathers' creed, from the might with which he broke and shattered his enemies in the battle.

The Merovingian kings had sunk into absolute insignificance, and had become mere puppets of royalty before the eighth century. Charles Martel, like his father, Pepin Heristal, was Duke of the Austrasian Franks, the bravest and most thoroughly Germanic part of the nation, and exercised, in the name of the titular king, what little paramount authority the turbulent minor rulers of districts and towns could be persuaded or compelled to acknowledge. Engaged with his national competitors in perpetual conflicts for power, and in more serious struggles for safety against the fierce tribes of the unconverted Frisians, Bavarians, Saxons, and Thuringians, who at that epoch assailed with peculiar ferocity the Christianized Germans on the left bank of the Rhine, Charles Martel added experienced skill to his natural courage, and he had also formed a

\* Martel—The Hammer. See the Scandinavian Sagas for an account of the favourite weapon of Thor.

militia of veterans among the Franks. Hallam has thrown out a doubt whether, in our admiration of his victory at Tours, we do not judge a little too much by the event, and whether there was not rashness in his risking the fate of France on the result of a general battle with the invaders. But, when we remember that Charles had no standing army, and the independent spirit of the Frank warriors who followed his standard, it seems most probable that it was not in his power to adopt the cautious policy of watching the invaders, and wearing out their strength by delay. So dreadful and so wide-spread were the ravages of the Saracenic light cavalry throughout Gaul, that it must have been impossible to restrain for any length of time the indignant ardour of the Franks. And, even if Charles could have persuaded his men to look tamely on while the Arabs stormed more towns and desolated more districts, he could not have kept an army together when the usual period of a military expedition had expired. If, indeed, the Arab account of the disorganization of the Moslem forces be correct, the battle was as well-timed on the part of Charles, as it was, beyond all question, well-fought.

The monkish chroniclers, from whom we are obliged to glean a narrative of this memorable campaign, bear full evidence to the terror which



the Saracen invasion inspired, and to the agony of that great struggle. The Saracens, say they, and their king, who was called Abdirames, came out of Spain, with all their wives, and their children, and their substance, in such great multitudes that no man could reckon or estimate them. They brought with them all their armour, and whatever they had, as if they were thenceforth always to dwell in France.\*

"Then Abderrahman, seeing the land filled with the multitude of his army, pierces through the mountains, tramples over rough and level ground, plunders far into the country of the Franks, and smites all with the sword, insomuch that when Eudo came to battle with him at the river Garonne, and fled before him, God alone knows the number of the slain. Then Abderrahman pursued after Count Eudo, and while he strives to spoil and burn the holy shrine at Tours, he encounters the chief of the Austrasian Franks, Charles, a man of war from his youth up, to whom Eudo had sent warning. There for nearly seven days they strive intensely, and at last they set

\* "Lors issirent d'Espagne li Sarrazins, et un leur Roi qui avoit nom Abdirames, et ont leur fames et leur enfans et toute leur substance en si grand plente que nus ne le prevoit nombrer ne estimer : tout leur harnois et quanques il avoient ameneement avec entz, aussi comme si ils deussent toujours mes habiter en France."

themselves in battle array, and the nations of the north standing firm as a wall, and impenetrable as a zone of ice, utterly slay the Arabs with the edge of the sword." \*

The European writers all concur in speaking of the fall of Abderrahman as one of the principal causes of the defeat of the Arabs; who, according to one writer, after finding that their leader was slain, dispersed in the night, to the agreeable surprise of the Christians, who expected the next morning to see them issue from their tents, and renew the combat. One monkish chronicler puts the loss of the Arabs at 375,000 men, while he says that only 1,007 Christians fell:—a disparity of loss which he feels bound to account for by a special interposition of Providence. I have translated above some of the most spirited passages of these writers; but it is impossible to collect from them anything like a full or authentic description of the great battle itself, or of the operations which preceded and followed it.

Though, however, we may have cause to regret the meagreness and doubtful character of these narratives, we have the great advantage of being able to compare the accounts given of Abderrahman's expedition by the national writers of each

\* Tunc Abdirrahman, multitudine sui exercitus repletam prospiciens terram, &c.—*Script. Gest. Franc.* p. 785.

side. This is a benefit which the inquirer into antiquity so seldom can obtain, that the fact of possessing it, in the case of the battle of Tours, makes us think the historical testimony respecting that great event more certain and satisfactory than is the case in many other instances, where we possess abundant details respecting military exploits, but where those details come to us from the annalist of one nation only; and where we have, consequently, no safeguard against the exaggerations, the distortions, and the fictions which national vanity has so often put forth in the garb and under the title of history. The Arabian writers who recorded the conquests and wars of their countrymen in Spain, have narrated also the expedition into Gaul of their great emir, and his defeat and death near Tours, in battle with the host of the Franks under King Chlodwig, the name into which they metamorphose Charles Martel.\*

They tell us how there was war between the count of the Frankish frontier and the Moslems,

\* The Arabian chronicles were compiled and translated into Spanish by Don Jose Antonio Conde, in his "*Historia de la Dominacion de los Arabos en España*," published at Madrid in 1820. Conde's plan, which I have endeavoured to follow, was to preserve both the style and spirit of his oriental authorities, so that we find in his pages a genuine Saracenic narrative of the wars in Western Europe between the Mohammedans and the Christians.

and how the count gathered together all his people, and fought for a time with doubtful success. "But," say the Arabian chroniclers, "Abderrahman drove them back; and the men of Abderrahman were puffed up in spirit by their repeated successes, and they were full of trust in the valour and the practice in war of their emir. So the Moslems smote their enemies, and passed the river Garonne, and laid waste the country, and took captives without number. And that army went through all places like a desolating storm. Prosperity made those warriors insatiable. At the passage of the river, Abderrahman overthrew the count, and the count retired into his stronghold, but the Moslems fought against it, and entered it by force, and slew the count; for everything gave way to their scymetars, which were the robbers of lives. All the nations of the Franks trembled at that terrible army, and they betook them to their king Calvus, and told him of the havoc made by the Moslem horsemen, and how they rode at their will through all the land of Narbonne, Toulouse, and Bourdeaux, and they told the king of the death of their count. Then the king bade them be of good cheer, and offered to aid them. And in the 114th year\* he mounted his horse, and he took with him a host that could not be numbered, and

\* Of the Hegira.

went against the Moslems. And he came upon them at the great city of Tours. And Abderrahman and other prudent cavaliers saw the disorder of the Moslem troops, who were loaded with spoil; but they did not venture to displease the soldiers by ordering them to abandon everything except their arms and war-horses. And Abderrahman trusted in the valour of his soldiers, and in the good fortune which had ever attended him. But (the Arab writer remarks) such defect of discipline always is fatal to armies. So Abderrahman and his host attacked Tours to gain still more spoil, and they fought against it so fiercely that they stormed the city almost before the eyes of the army that came to save it; and the fury and the cruelty of the Moslems towards the inhabitants of the city was like the fury and cruelty of raging tigers. It was manifest," adds the Arab, "that God's chastisement was sure to follow such excesses; and fortune thereupon turned her back upon the Moslems.

"Near the river Owar,\* the two great hosts of the two languages and the two creeds were set in array against each other. The hearts of Abderrahman, his captains, and his men were filled with wrath and pride, and they were the first to begin the fight. The Moslem horsemen dashed fierce

\* Probably the Loire.

and frequent forward against the battalions of the Franks, who resisted manfully, and many fell dead on either side, until the going down of the sun. Night parted the two armies; but in the grey of the morning, the Moslems returned to the battle. Their cavaliers had soon hewn their way into the centre of the Christian host. But many of the Moslems were fearful for the safety of the spoil which they had stored in their tents, and a false cry arose in their ranks that some of the enemy were plundering the camp; whereupon several squadrons of the Moslem horsemen rode off to protect their tents. But it seemed as if they fled; and all the host was troubled. And while Abderrahman strove to check their tumult, and to lead them back to battle, the warriors of the Franks came around him, and he was pierced through with many spears, so that he died. Then all the host fled before the enemy, and many died in the flight. This deadly defeat of the Moslems, and the loss of the great leader and good cavalier, Abderrahman, took place in the hundred and fifteenth year."

It would be difficult to expect from an adversary a more explicit confession of having been thoroughly vanquished, than the Arabs here accord to the Europeans. The points on which their narrative differs from those of the Christians,—as to

how many days the conflict lasted, whether the assailed city was actually rescued or not, and the like,—are of little moment compared with the admitted great fact that there was a decisive trial of strength between Frank and Saracen, in which the former conquered. The enduring importance of the battle of Tours in the eyes of the Moslems, is attested not only by the expressions of “the deadly battle,” and “the disgraceful overthrow,” which their writers constantly employ when referring to it, but also by the fact, that no more serious attempts at conquest beyond the Pyrenees were made by the Saracens. Charles Martel, and his son and grandson, were left at leisure to consolidate and extend their power. The new Christian Roman Empire of the West, which the genius of Charlemagne founded, and throughout which his iron will imposed peace on the old anarchy of creeds and races, did not indeed retain its integrity after its great ruler’s death. Fresh troubles came over Europe; but Christendom, though disunited, was safe. The progress of civilization, and the development of the nationalities and governments of modern Europe, from that time forth, went forward in not uninterrupted, but, ultimately, certain career.

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SYNOPSIS OF EVENTS BETWEEN THE BATTLE OF  
TOURS, A.D. 732, AND THE BATTLE OF HAST-  
INGS, 1066.

A. D. 768—814. Reign of Charlemagne. This monarch has justly been termed the principal regenerator of western Europe, after the destruction of the Roman empire. The early death of his brother Carloman left him sole master of the dominion of the Franks, which, by a succession of victorious wars, he enlarged into the new Empire of the West. He conquered the Lombards, and re-established the pope at Rome, who in return acknowledged Charles as suzerain of Italy. And in the year 800, Leo III., in the name of the Roman people, solemnly crowned Charlemagne at Rome, as emperor of the Roman Empire of the West. In Spain Charlemagne ruled the country between the Pyrenees and the Ebro; but his most important conquests were effected on the eastern side of his original kingdom, over the Sclavonians of Bohemia, the Avars of Pannonia, and over the previously uncivilized German tribes, who had remained in their fatherland. The old Saxons were his most obstinate antagonists, and his wars with them lasted for thirty years. Under him the greater part of Germany was compulsorily civi-



lized and converted from Paganism to Christianity His empire extended eastward as far as the Elbe, the Saale, the Bohemian mountains, and a line drawn from thence crossing the Danube above Vienna, and prolonged to the Gulf of Istria.\*

Throughout this vast assemblage of provinces, Charlemagne established an organized and firm government. But it is not as a mere conqueror that he demands admiration. "In a life restlessly active we see him reforming the coinage and establishing the legal divisions of money, gathering about him the learned of every country; founding schools and collecting libraries; interfering, with the air of a king, in religious controversies; attempting, for the sake of commerce, the magnificent enterprise of uniting the Rhine and the Danube, and meditating to mould the discordant code of Roman and barbarian laws into an uniform system." †

814—888. Repeated partitions of the empire and civil wars between Charlemagne's descendants. Ultimately the kingdom of France is finally separated from Germany and Italy. In 962, Otho the Great of Germany revives the imperial dignity.

\* Hallam's "Middle Ages." † Hallam, *ut supra*.

827. Egbert, King of Wessex, acquires the supremacy over the other Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.

832. The first Danish squadron attacks part of the English coast. The Danes, or Northmen, had begun their ravages in France a few years earlier. For two centuries Scandinavia sends out fleet after fleet of sea-rovers, who desolate all the western kingdoms of Europe, and in many cases effect permanent conquests.

871—900. Reign of Alfred in England. After a long and varied struggle he rescues England from the Danish invaders.

911. The French king cedes Neustria to Hrolf the Northman. Hrolf (or Duke Rollo, as he thenceforth was termed) and his army of Scandinavian warriors become the ruling class of the population of the province, which is called after them Normandy.

1016. Four knights from Normandy, who had been on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, while returning through Italy head the people of Salerno in repelling an attack of a band of Saracen corsairs. In the next year many adventurers from Normandy settle in Italy, where they conquer Apulia (1040), and afterwards (1060) Sicily.

1017. Canute, king of Denmark, becomes king of England. On the death of the last of his sons,

in 1041, the Saxon line is restored, and Edward the Confessor (who had been bred in the court of the Duke of Normandy) is called by the English to the throne of this island, as the representative of the House of Cerdic.

1035. Duke Robert of Normandy dies on his return from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and his son William (afterwards the conqueror of England) succeeds to the dukedom of Normandy.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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